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The Shape of Things

RUSSIA'S RESTATEMENT OF ITS TREATY OF friendship with Turkey and its promise of complete neutrality should Turkey be attacked and obliged to enter the war, represents another cautious but significant move by Moscow to check the German advance towards the Dardanelles. Like the recent Soviet rebuke to Bulgaria it avoids a direct challenge to Hitler but it does convey a warning. For the Turks it constitutes a real encouragement to resist Nazi encroachments by relieving them of anxiety about their backdoor in the Caucasus region should the German armies begin pounding at the front. It may mean further a prospect of Soviet "aid-short-of-war" if and when hostilities break out. The agreement is also important to Britain whose alliance with Turkey has been limited by an "escape clause" excusing the latter from any action embroiling it with Russia. In the negotiations leading up to the new declaration Sir Stafford Cripps, British Ambassador to Moscow, is believed to have played an important part, thus achieving, after a long uphill struggle, a genuine diplomatic triumph. According to persistent but as yet unconfirmed reports, Russia's efforts to impede the Nazi conquest of the Balkans include a ban on oil shipments promulgated the day Bulgaria was taken over. There is also reason to suppose that the wave of sabotage in Bulgaria, attributed by the Nazis to the British secret service, is at least partly inspired by Moscow.

*

IN CONSENTING TO THE PASSAGE THROUGH the blockade of two ships laden with flour for France, the British government seems to have been motivated chiefly by a desire to please Washington. Its position is that this shipment is exceptional and that the policy of including unoccupied France within the blockaded area must continue. Only if the Vichy government consented to conditions demonstrating its independence of Germany, such as the removal of the French fleet to the colonies, could Britain afford to treat unoccupied France as outside the German military and economic sphere. But when it comes to negotiations along such lines, Pétain and Darlan are not free agents; they must take orders from Berlin, whose representatives are stationed in Vichy

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with power to control the activities of the French Foreign Ministry. In its dealings with Ambassador Henry-Haye over the food ships the State Department seems to us to have followed the unrealistic line of treating him as speaking for a fully independent power. This means ignoring mounting evidence that the carefully purged French missions and consulates throughout the world are being assigned tasks on behalf of Germany which it would be inconvenient or impossible for German diplomats to carry out themselves. Vichy's subordinate position has just been underlined again by press attacks on Admiral Leahy. Not only the Paris newspapers, but *l'Illustration,* a national magazine which circulates in unoccupied as well as occupied France, depict Leahy as a plotter and schemer and describe American aid to France as a "profiteering move" engineered by the Jews. When the hand of Goebbels is so plainly shown in France, our government should be chary of philanthropic efforts which can be used to wedge open the blockade door.

*

JAY ALLEN MUST HAVE PICKED UP A peculiarly juicy bit of news in occupied France, to judge by the drastic form of censorship to which it has been subjected. To head off Mr. Allen's potential scoop the occupying authorities have hit on the remarkably simple device of holding the American correspondent in jail until his story goes stale. At least that is the interpretation which the Associated Press puts on the incident, and it is hard to find any other explanation. Mr. Allen's technical offense was the crossing of the boundary between the occupied and unoccupied zones of France without benefit of credentials. Informants tell us that this is done hundreds of times daily and one would hardly suppose that it called for more than a fine or a few days' detention at the worst. In Mr. Allen's case the German officials, dispensing with the formalities of a trial, have sent the offender to prison for "investigation" and indicate that they will keep him there for at least two months.

*

WALTER FUNK, REICH ECONOMICS MINISTER and president of the Reichsbank, has been boasting to the stockholders of that institution about the wonders of German war finance and the international position of German currency. During 1940, he said, the mark so expanded its sphere of influence that today "it practically dominates Europe." That is true. The mark has followed the swastika, and everywhere the peoples of conquered and "protected" countries are forced to accept German currency at such rates of exchange as the Nazis choose to order. This means in every case that the mark is given an inflated value in terms of other currencies, permitting the Germans to buy up cheaply whatever goods are obtainable. After the march into Rumania the former exchange rate of 50 leis to the mark was arbitrarily hoisted to 60 leis. The Rumanians are compelled to sell their product for fewer marks than before and even then they cannot use these marks to buy freely in Germany since the German export capacity is far too limited, under war conditions, to permit satisfaction of all foreign demand. Externally, as well as internally, Germany is financing the war by limiting consumption to the barest subsistence level. The Nazis have repudiated the gold standard as, to quote Herr Funk, "an instrument misused for purposes of oppression in the interests of power politics." They have substituted for it the infinitely more oppressive bayonet standard. Whether they will find this efficient for their purposes, except as a means of rounding up existing surpluses, is another matter. They need the agricultural production of all Europe; but farmers offered money which has no exchange value in terms of goods have a way of restricting output to their own consumption—a habit that would be difficult to cure except by the assignment of a policeman to every field, cowshed, and henroost.

*

WHILE MATSUOKA IS IN EUROPE TRYING TO obtain some concrete support for Japan for its long-heralded drive to the south, little may be expected to happen in the Far East. The Japanese have effected another landing north of Hongkong and have occupied two minor ports in that area. But the Chinese countered by reoccupying several towns along the West River front in Kwangtung, and retaking all the positions recently lost to the Japanese on the south bank of the Yangtse, opposite Ichang. Reliable reports indicate that Chiang Kai-shek is awaiting only the delivery of American airplanes before launching a major offensive against the Japanese. The recent appointment of John Earl Baker as director of traffic on the Burma road promises immediate relief with regard to China's knotty transport problem, while the allotment of funds to build a railway to the Burmese border and plans for an additional highway to India should provide a more fundamental solution in 1942 or 1943. Reports that Japan is sending a large army through Thailand to the Burmese border seem to be definitely premature. If such plans existed the recent visit of units of the American fleet to Australia and New Zealand may have encouraged their return to cold storage.

*

A MOVE TOWARD A CONFERENCE BETWEEN British and American labor leaders has been taken by the Steel City Industrial Union Council in Pittsburgh, which has called upon the Congress of Industrial Organizations to communicate "at once" with proper representatives of the British labor movement. The council suggests that spokesmen of British and American labor get together to discuss "American aid to Britain short of war, joint

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economic and political defense, war aims, and the long-range purposes of the democratic cause." The Pittsburgh group has dispatched copies of its statement to similar groups in other parts of the country, urging that they adopt similar resolutions, and current reports indicate favorable action in a number of localities. It is particularly significant that the move was initiated in Pittsburgh. The industrial council of that city is first of all an important clearing-house for workers in the steel, coal, electrical, and other defense industries, and represents unions with a membership of nearly 100,000. Secondly, it is Philip Murray's own bailiwick and while the resolution does not bear his endorsement, he undoubtedly approves it. Finally, the move is in direct opposition to the Communist clamor about an "imperialist" war and indicates a recognition of labor's prominent role on both sides of the Atlantic. It is an idea that merits the support of all labor and liberal groups.

*

FIFTY THOUSAND NEW JOBS AND A CUT IN electric rates of 25 per cent are promised New York State in Part VI of the St. Lawrence Survey now being prepared for the Department of Commerce under the direction of N. R. Danielian. It is stated that the project would reverse the decline in manufacturing industry in the state during the past decade. But the more immediate case for the Canadian-American St. Lawrence pact soon to be submitted to Congress was made by Assistant Secretary of State Berle. Berle pointed out that development of the St. Lawrence for both power and navigation had become a defense necessity. Aluminum for planes, chemicals for explosives, and electric furnaces for the new alloys so important in modern armament all require cheap and plentiful power. At the present time we are borrowing power from the Canadian side of the St. Lawrence for American industries, although Canada needs this power badly—now that the Nazi occupation of Norway forces Britain to depend more than ever on Canada for pulp wood, ferro-alloys, and chemicals. Opening of navigation on the St. Lawrence would also make it possible to build ships on the Great Lakes, as we did in the last war. At that time it was necessary, Berle points out, to "cut these ships in two and float them in parts down to Montreal." The railroad and utility lobby, which long blocked development of the St. Lawrence, is in action again, and the vote in Congress will be a clear choice between these private interests and defense.

*

SENATOR NORRIS'S LETTER TO C. I. O. HEAD Philip Murray and A. F. of L. President William Green calling for action against the exorbitant initiation fees charged by some unions will be heartily endorsed by friends of labor throughout the country. Although the practice is not as widespread as the public has been led to believe, no one will dispute the essential accuracy of the facts as cited by the veteran Nebraska Senator. Some few unions, particularly in the building trades, have long charged excessive initiation fees and monthly dues. This has been done on the theory that the best way to maintain wages and favorable conditions within the industry was to keep down the number of qualified workers. Whatever justification this policy may seem to have had during the depression, it is obviously not applicable to the present period when every skilled worker is needed in defense work. As Senator Norris pointed out, there is no easy remedy for the situation. Practices of this type are controlled by the local unions, many of them of the racketeering variety. Since few, if any, of these are affiliated with the C. I. O., Philip Murray should have no difficulty in throwing the prestige and weight of the C. I. O. against these evils. Mr. Green's position is much more difficult, but it is impossible to believe that the long-delayed drive against racketeering unions within the A. F. of L. would not bear fruit if it were energetically pushed.

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THE INDICTMENT OF MORRIS U. SCHAPPES IS in no sense a violation of his rights as an American citizen. Mr. Schappes is not accused of Communism; he is charged with perjury. And he will have his day in court. He may convince a jury that as a leading Communist on the teaching staff of City College he really believed that there were only four members in the Communist Party's unit at that institution; that from 1938 through 1939 he was the sole member of the party on the campus; that for a year he was sole editor of the unit paper; that he knew of no Communist other than himself who was a member of the teachers' union while he was in the party; and that there was no Communist faction within that union. Even if he doesn't convince the jury that he believed all these statements to be true when he so testified before the Rapp-Coudert committee he will go free unless the state proves that they were untrue and that Schappes knew them to be untrue. All the indictment sets forth is the improbability of his testimony, and a more warranted indictment we can hardly imagine. Nor can we guess why Schappes found it necessary to expose himself to an inevitable prosecution. If his revolutionary conscience forbade his revealing any names, he could have refused to testify altogether. Had he been held in contempt as a result, he could then have defended himself on principle and at worst subjected himself to a minor penalty. Instead he has chosen to spin out a yarn that would tax the most flexible imagination. No doubt it is perfectly fitting for Communists to make such use of public agencies as their revolutionary standards may dictate, but it is equally in keeping for the state to deny them the privilege of perjury which is not extended to ordinary citizens. No doubt the Communists, for all their squawk-

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ing, understand this better than the dupes who now come forward to champion Mr. Schappes in the name of academic freedom.

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THE DEATH OF CONSTANCE ROURKE REMOVES one of the most gifted of American critics and historians at a time when her rich research was about to bear fruit in what would surely have been a major and basic work on American culture. She was a scholar of the first order, but she was also one of those rare critics who create as they judge. Sure taste, a strict sense of values, broad knowledge, a remarkable gift of expression, humor, and a capacity for general ideas—these were the tools with which she set out to explore and define the forms of the American imagination. Her underlying purpose was to bring to the American present a greater and more informed awareness of the American past, especially in the arts; for it was her conviction that specific, integrated knowledge and understanding of the past was indispensable to the creative worker in any field. No doubt a way will be found to make available the results of many years of pioneer research and fresh thought along these lines—of which "American Humor" was both prologue and promise. Meanwhile those who knew her will find her death untimely in the most acute personal sense. She was so much more alive than most people that the news of her sudden passing strikes with a double force.

Hitler's Partial Victory

WITH the adherence of Yugoslavia to a modified form of the Tripartite Pact, Hitler has won another diplomatic success. But thanks to a spontaneous outburst of popular opposition, of a kind which is thrilling to see emerge in the browbeaten Balkans, his victory is only partial and may very well prove a Pyrrhic one.

There can be no doubt that what the Nazis wanted from Yugoslavia was an agreement similar to that which they forced upon Bulgaria. They demanded adherence to the Axis, German supervision of military and economic policies, and the right to move troops into and through Yugoslavia. The last item was of immediate importance in the campaign to force Greece to abandon its alliance with Britain, if possible by the methods of cold terror, if necessary by invasion and conquest. It is true that Germany has command of the routes into Greece from Bulgaria. But the best of these, the Struma valley, is a narrow gorge winding through difficult country, offering insufficient space for the easy deployment of a force large enough to overwhelm the Greek defenses rapidly. Conquest by this route might eventually prove possible but it might also prove extremely expensive.

The broad Vardar valley, on the other hand, leading through Yugoslavia direct to Salonika, offers a far more practicable pathway for a mechanized army, and there can be little doubt that it is this road which the German general staff hoped to follow. But the Belgrade government, for all its fears of Germany, dared not face the consequences of such a surrender of its independence and refused to sign any agreement involving actual occupation of the country. Instead, it finally accepted a compromise by which Yugoslavia would become a limited member of the Axis. It was to receive a guarantee of its territorial integrity and of an outlet to the Aegean. In return it agreed to permit German hospital and munition trains to pass through its territory, to halt all anti-Axis propaganda, and to foster "economic cooperation" by accepting the assistance of German technical experts and granting new concessions to Germany.

Even though German troops were barred, this agreement went a long way toward the complete surrender of Yugoslavia's independence, and when it was put before the full Cabinet for final approval that body split badly. Despite all sorts of pressure, three leading members resigned and their action served to fan into flame anti-Axis sentiment which had long been smoldering throughout the country, and particularly in Old Serbia and Bosnia. Opposition to any kind of surrender to the Axis seems to have united all classes and groups in these sections. The peasants and mountaineers who form the bulk of the population come of a tough and democratic strain. They despise the Italians and hate the Germans, and they have not forgotten that they fought the last war in alliance with Britain and won their independence.

The situation in Croatia and Slovenia is rather different. Apart from some minor fascist groups, there is no evidence of pro-Axis sentiment in these provinces. But they lie to the north and their broad plains are fearfully exposed to invasion. Should it come they will be the first to suffer, for it is known that in the event of war the Yugoslav army, with its poor equipment, could not defend this part of the country. It could only hope to put up a prolonged resistance by withdrawing to the southern and western mountains and resorting to guerrilla tactics.

As the news spreads through the country that the pact with Germany and Italy has been signed, there are likely to be further explosions of popular opinion which may lead to open revolt. Threats of assassination have already been uttered against those members of the government who are known to have advocated adherence to the Axis. There is at least a doubt that the government can count on the army and the police, and it will have enormous difficulties in carrying out the undertaking to suppress anti-Axis sentiment. Nor is it probable that German munition trains will be able to pass through the country unmolested: their advent will almost certainly be the signal for an outburst of sabotage.

This is why we expect Hitler's diplomatic victory will prove a Pyrrhic one. Even the limited degree of coopera-

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tion which he is now exacting from Yugoslavia can hardly be obtained unless it is backed by his own troops. Yet any attempt to revise the agreement so as to allow him to provide his own protective forces to guard the railroads will almost certainly provoke the bloody resistance which he has tried to avoid, not for any humanitarian reasons, but because his plans would be impeded by the opening of a second front in the Balkans.

New Mediation Board

THE personnel and set-up of the National Defense Mediation Board represent a victory for Sidney Hillman, associate director of the OPM, for the labor movement, and for the New Deal. It was conceived as a means of stemming the growing reactionary drive for legislative curbs on the right to strike, and friends of labor have every assurance that it will not turn into a strike-breaking instrument. The three public representatives on this board of eleven are men who command wide public confidence and at the same time have demonstrated a liberal point of view. Clarence A. Dykstra, the chairman, has wisely asked to be relieved of his duties as director of Selective Service, a move which should spike the whispers that his appointment to head the mediation board indicated that the Administration was prepared to "draft" workers who did not agree to its decisions. Dr. Dykstra made an excellent record as city manager of Cincinnati and as president of the University of Wisconsin. William H. Davis is a famous patent lawyer whose work in the National Recovery Administration made him many friends in the New Deal. The third public representative, Frank P. Graham, president of the University of North Carolina, has proved his courage and his liberalism many times in the past. Experience with mediation boards indicates that representatives of both labor and capital tend to vote "a straight ticket" in virtually all disputes, leaving the balance of power and the decision in the hands of the public representatives. We think labor's case will be in good hands on this board.

The labor representatives on the board seem to us excellent. Philip Murray and Thomas Kennedy are both men of practical experience as well as outstanding labor leaders. George M. Harrison, as head of the Railway Clerks, has always shown the progressive outlook we have come to expect from the Brotherhoods. George Meany, now secretary-treasurer of the A. F. of L., may find it easier than some of the older federation leaders to work peacefully with the C. I. O.'s representatives on the board and perhaps together they may informally exert a good influence toward the elimination of jurisdictional strikes.

On the employer side the member about whom we have the greatest misgivings is Roger D. Lapham of the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company. The American-Hawaiian steamship and pineapple interests have been the very heart of the reactionary bloc on the West Coast. Walter C. Teagle of Standard Oil is certainly no friend of unionism but during the NRA he at least had some experience of working in harness with representatives of government and labor. Cyrus S. Ching of United States Rubber is an enlightened business man of a kind we wish were more plentiful. He has often shown his understanding of, and friendliness toward, the labor movement in the past. Ching played a commendable role in bringing about the settlement of the strike in Bethlehem's Lackawanna plant. Eugene S. Meyer, the fourth employer representative, is a conservative with unexpected streaks of liberalism. The Washington *Post,* which he publishes, was one of the few papers in this country to welcome the Reuther plan. It has a good record on civil liberties and it ran an editorial on March 22 calling Ford's labor position "untenable." "A few large companies," the *Post* said, "are still denying their employees the rights guaranteed to them under the National Labor Relations Act. Wherever that situation exists, the primary responsibility for labor disputes which disrupt or threaten to delay production for defense rests upon the employer." It is a pity that more conservative publications are not willing to do their bit for better industrial relations by making the same admission.

It remains to be pointed out that the new board will not have carte blanche to inject itself into any and every strike. The primary responsibility will remain with the United States Conciliation Service, which has done excellent work in the past. The mediation board will go into action only when Secretary of Labor Perkins has certified that a labor dispute threatens to interfere with defense. In the last war the mediation board headed by William Howard Taft and Frank P. Walsh was an instrument through which labor made many peaceful gains in the shape of increased membership and higher wages. We believe the new board may prove equally useful in reducing strikes and in helping labor to obtain a square deal in industry.

The War at Sea

THE activity of a German battle fleet in the Atlantic —admitted by the British and extolled by the Nazis —ushers in what is perhaps the most crucial phase of the war. Berlin claims that within a few days its surface raiders sank twenty-two armed merchantmen totaling some 116,000 tons, and that an additional 108,000 tons of shipping was destroyed by submarines and airplanes. Undoubtedly these claims are exaggerated. The Nazis have habitually set British losses close to double those admitted in London. But with full allowance for swollen

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claims, the situation is undeniably serious. The Admiralty has admitted losses in two weeks of some 240,000 tons of British and Allied shipping. If German reports are any criterion, the total for the coming week will be well above this level. Experts are agreed that Britain cannot continue to suffer losses on this scale if it is to win the war.

As the war spreads into the Balkans, Africa, and, possibly, the Far East, the need for shipping will increase. To transport and supply expeditionary forces of any size requires large numbers of ships. Additional shipping will be needed as Britain's reserves of raw materials and foodstuffs are depleted, and for transporting the increased supplies made available under the Lease-Lend bill. It is obvious that Britain, even with help from the United States, cannot build ships as rapidly as Germany can sink them. At most, construction is estimated at 2,100,000 tons in 1941—utilizing both British and American resources to the utmost. The pace can be stepped up considerably in 1942 and 1943; but Britain's problem is how to get through the next twelve months. To do this it must draw on existing American resources. The United States itself is short of ships at this moment. We are having difficulty obtaining the tin, rubber, and manganese required in our defense industries because of a shortage of vessels. We have already transferred or sold some 1,400,000 tons to Britain since the outbreak of the war—about 20 per cent of our total tonnage. Yet greater sacrifices are clearly called for if our aid to Britain is to be more than a futile gesture.

As a first step the United States is likely to begin shipping supplies destined to Britain as far as Halifax in American ships, cutting several days off each trans-Atlantic journey for British freighters. Arrangements are believed to be under way for repairing British naval ships in American yards, as provided in the Lease-Lend bill, and for arming British merchantmen on this side of the Atlantic. Where the additional needed ships are to come from is not yet wholly clear, but there are 362 vessels in the coastwise service which, with a few exceptions, could be utilized for overseas service. This would place a greater burden on the railroads, but they seem capable of assuming the task. Merely providing additional merchant shipping to be sunk by the Nazis is not, however, an answer to the problem. The crucial question is that of protection. The bridge of ships which the President has called for must be safeguarded if it is to be kept intact. It is evident that Britain has not the resources to do this under present conditions. If our supplies are to reach their destination, the United States must either give direct protection through convoys—which would probably be regarded as an act of war—or provide Great Britain with the cruisers, destroyers, and other light naval units needed to keep the shipping lanes open. Choice between these alternatives cannot long be deferred.

A Bad Housing Bill

AN extraordinarily bad defense-housing bill has passed the House and is up for consideration in the Senate. The bill, known as H. R. 3575, would authorize the Federal Housing Administration to issue federal-guaranteed home mortgages up to a total of $100,000,000 to builders and contractors. This is a sharp departure from present practice under which federal-guaranteed mortgages are issued only to owner-tenants. It would eliminate for such loans the 10 to 20 per cent down payment now required for the purchase of a house and would raise the interest rate to as much as 6 per cent. The builder is not restricted as to the disposition of these houses.

Strong opposition to the bill in its present form was voiced in the recent hearings before the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency by Miss Harriet Elliott, consumer representative on the Defense Commission, and by representatives of the American Federation of Labor. Miss Elliott objected chiefly to the lack of any protection for the prospective purchasers or tenants of the houses to be constructed under this bill. As the measure stands there is nothing to prevent builders from selling the houses at a speculative profit, or from taking advantage of the emergency to rent the houses at exorbitant rates. The increase in interest charges would add to the burden of workers who might get caught in the post-war depression with houses bought at inflated prices.

The A. F. of L. representatives were even more sweeping in their denunciation. They pointed out that the bill offers nothing but possible headaches for workers in the crowded defense centers. If the government does not provide decent housing, it may be taken for granted that private enterprise will use the speculative opportunities to provide housing of a type. Much, if not most of it, will doubtless be of an inferior, shoddy type, and, unless protective legislation is adopted, rents and selling prices will be exorbitant. This measure does not apply to temporary structures, but it provides a bounty for profiteers by offering government-guaranteed mortgages to potential speculators. All risk is removed as far as the lending institution and the speculative builder are concerned because the government assumes the final responsibility.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to kill the bill altogether in order to eliminate its bad features. In view of the urgent shortage of houses in defense areas, private construction should be encouraged—with elementary safeguards for the families for whom the homes are intended. This might be achieved by amendments prohibiting speculative charges in the sale of such houses as well as excessive rentals, and providing that no deficiency judgments could be made against workers living in these houses in the event of default caused by the termination of their employment in defense industries.

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What Mr. Knudsen Thinks

BY I. F. STONE

Washington, March 22

WILLIAM S. KNUDSEN, production chief of the defense program, made an "off the record" speech at a National Press Club luncheon last Wednesday, and it left your correspondent and a few like him in a low state of mind. Washington correspondents are not the browbeaten helots of a kept press; on the contrary, most of them have fewer misgivings about the economic status quo than Lamont—Thomas W., not Corliss. Few of them need to be told in which receptacle to place a Bureau of Labor Statistics release showing that only a third as many days were lost in strikes last year as in the year before we entered the last war. At Press Club affairs there is always more than a sprinkling of advertising executives, lobbyists, and press agents. The faces are the faces one sees at the Rotary Club in Camden, N. J., or the Kiwanis in Davenport, Iowa. A look at them explains why the President's great speech on March 15 evoked substantial applause only at his reference to strikes. Though Mr. Roosevelt was careful to refer to "unnecessary" strikes, I'm sure his audience, in a mood for sacrifice after its $7.50 dinner, generously assumed that he meant all strikes were unnecessary. Knudsen's speech Wednesday was more to their liking, though a minority of us found it harder to stomach than the Lenten filet of sole. I cannot risk the old school tie by discussing his speech, but most of those present felt that Knudsen had told labor where to get off, always a popular topic with the $5,000-a-year *lumpenproletariat*.

There are signs that some time between February 19 and February 28, Alfred P. Sloan had a heart-to-heart talk with Knudsen. On February 19 Knudsen told the House Judiciary Committee no new strike legislation was needed; on February 28 he sent the committee a letter suggesting a three-point program to curb strikes. The Press Club speech, like the Knudsen press conference which followed it, reflected the change which has occurred in Knudsen's division. An open contempt in dealing with labor's claims and labor's suggestions is evident, and there are indications that Hillman may not take it lying down. The OPM has a squawk against labor in the jurisdictional strike, but it would have been tactful and gracious to admit that some at least of the other strikes are caused by an unwillingness to obey the Wagner Act or to pay a decent wage. To tell $20-a-week workers that they must not "take advantage of defense" is not too safe as long as they can read the financial pages. Nor is it wise to dismiss the Reuther plan in the cavalier fashion adopted by Knudsen.

I always thought that the secret of running a successful business was to make your workers feel they were a part of it and that any suggestions they had were welcome. I don't see why this doesn't apply to the business of running a defense program. Business spokesmen say they want labor's cooperation. The Reuther plan was the first of the proposals put forward by that section of labor which genuinely wants to cooperate on aid to Britain and the defense program. I should think these proposals would be dealt with in a way to make labor feel that suggestions are appreciated. Knudsen made it clear on Wednesday that he thinks labor ought to mind its own business. Conceivably the people who may have to fight to defend their country might think it their business to make sure it was being adequately prepared.

I should think that where a suggestion from labor was impracticable, there would be a desire to give it so fair a hearing as to win the good will of its sponsors. The Reuther plan has been kicking around Washington since last August, and if it had not been for the burst of publicity which followed *The Nation's* story on it last December 21 and the interest shown by the President, the plan would have been buried long ago. It was not until February 28 that Knudsen gave Reuther a hearing and then he chose to listen alone to what he already knew. He had heard the details from Hillman months before, and there was some surprise that none of Knudsen's production aides sat in on the conference. Knudsen swore Reuther to secrecy, and then proceeded to tell his side of the story, first, "off the record" at Wednesday's luncheon and then at the press conference which followed. The test was whether it was possible, by special jigs and fixtures, to adapt idle automotive equipment to quantity production of plane parts. "They wanted to go into the shop as a union committee," Knudsen told his press conference, "and try to design fixtures for the present machinery and that was putting the master mechanic out of the job. We had to stall on that one. . . ."

This, the most spectacular aspect of the Reuther plan, is not the only one on which Knudsen has stalled. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, automotive industry spokesmen tell the press that the Reuther plan is impracticable; on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, that "we're already doing it." They mean that through subcontracting and the much-publicized bomber plan the

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automobile industry is already making parts of planes. Reuther suggested that the full productive capacity of the industry cannot be utilized for defense until its present production curve is flattened out. So long as production of cars is concentrated in a few winter months, many machines must be kept idle the rest of the year for use during the peak season. But instead of looking into this quite obvious suggestion, the industry isn't even proposing to use what idle capacity it has under present conditions. The government is financing new factories for Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors. Parts and subassemblies for bombers will be made in these plants rather than with existing equipment. This may slow up production but it has its advantages for the companies.

The Reuther plan also called public attention to the fact that about half the machine-tool capacity of the automotive industry is in its captive shops, i.e., the shops which belong to the automobile companies and do most of the tooling for new models. Reuther and his aides claim that these are only working at one-fourth capacity. They could make almost any kind of tool needed for defense. "What is the main drawback now in our national defense effort?" Knudsen was asked at his press conference. "What is the main thing holding us back generally?" Knudsen's answer was, "I think tools."

Any one of the suggestions embodied in the Reuther plan would upset business-as-usual, but part of the dislike for it springs from deeper sources. An unwillingness to permit democratic participation in the defense program is characteristic of OPM activities. A notable example is the run-around given the community committees of small business men, unions, and local agencies, which have been trying unsuccessfully to participate in the farming-out program. The masters of enterprise fear community committees and shop committees as instinctively as monarchs feared parliaments. "Now, Walter," Knudsen said to Reuther at a General Motors wage negotiation some years ago, "no class conflict stuff." I wonder whether they really fear class conflict as much as they fear class cooperation.

The War in the Desert

BY RAOUL AGLION

AT THE beginning of the war I was an attaché in the French legation at Cairo. When Hitler conquered France I resigned my post and from that time until the fall of Sidi Barrani I had a splendid opportunity to observe the war in Africa. I saw General Sir Archibald Wavell's fabulous desert army cut down its Italian foe.

When the fighting in North Africa began, the Italians had by far the better position. For five years they had been accumulating vast stores of ammunition. Their colonial troops had been concentrated in Libya—an army of 275,000 men, including 45,000 natives, ready to fight on both Egyptian and Tunisian frontiers. In Ethiopia they had another army of 125,000 men, including native and Somali troops. To counter these forces the British had not more than 30,000 soldiers. These were faced with the task of defending Egypt, the Sudan, and the Suez Canal, and they had to be ready to throw back a pincer attack on Egypt from the south and west.

The western desert of Egypt is one of the barest places on earth. For the most part a plateau, its topography is a baffling maze of shifting sand dunes which make military movements slow and difficult. Before the Italians, no one had ever attempted to attack Egypt from a Libyan base. Past conquerors—Persians, Arabs, and Turks—struck from the east, or, as in the case of Napoleon and the British, by sea from the north. However, history did not dismay Mussolini's legions, whose grand objective was Alexandria and the Suez Canal.

Soon after the collapse of France the Italians prepared to transfer their troops from the Tunisian frontier to Libya's eastern border. This meant not only the shifting of troops but the transport of all the supplies required by a mechanized army: tanks, Bren-carriers, ammunition, food, water, ambulances, hospital equipment, and machines for repairing matériel. This great movement of men and supplies was constantly hampered by British aerial and naval attacks along the only important Italian road, the Via Mussolini, and it was not until the first days of August that the Italians were at last ready to move against Egypt, separated from the Italian colonies only by barbed wire fences which the Fascists themselves had erected along the shores and around the wells.

Dolbin

General Wavell

Successively the Italian forces occupied Fort Capuzzo,

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Solum, Buqbuq, and Sidi Barrani, 200 miles from Alexandria. Their main handicap was lack of water. In the hundred miles between Solum and Sidi Barrani there are only eight wells and no water at all from Sidi Barrani to the British base of Mersa Matruh.

Late in August the Italians dug in to prepare the advance from Sidi Barrani. On the other side Wavell and his Near East forces had organized an enormous camp at Mersa Matruh and fortified it with ditches, walls, and barbed wire fences. The base had unhampered supply lines with Alexandria, where munitions for the British were unloaded. British troops had begun to arrive in small sections from all over the world. In the streets of Cairo I heard British soldiers talking their mother tongue with the curiously different accents of Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and Rhodesia. There were British soldiers from the island of Cyprus who spoke Greek. In addition, men from the Sudan spoke Arab; Hindus spoke Hindustani; French was the tongue of the soldiers from the garrison on the island of Mauritius; Jewish soldiers from Palestine spoke Hebrew, and the Maltese spoke a mixture of Latin and Italian. One got the impression that the whole world was on Britain's side. Each group lived in its accustomed fashion and ate its national food. Native officers led their troops, often under their own colors. There were priests of a dozen faiths. The Allied troops were joined by the army of the Nile: Free French from all parts of Syria, Central and West Africa, New Caledonia, and Europe. There were Polish cavalrymen, perfectly equipped and trained, Czech soldiers, and Free Libyans joining the Senussi in the war for their national liberation.

The morale of the Italians was, if anything, somewhat worse than British and American press reports described. The Blackshirt troops, who did much of the fighting, especially in less dangerous salients, were known even in the regular Italian army as "street soldiers" and the regular army itself was anything but a paragon of bravery. I recall an occasion when four British soldiers were captured by 230 Blackshirts. The Fascists asked their prisoners if a British capture of Sidi Barrani seemed likely. The English said that their army was already advancing on the Italian fort. Hearing that, the leader of the Italians surrendered his isolated battalion to its prisoners. After the capture of Sidi Barrani, Wavell's men went after this battalion which, the British naturally thought, was still holding its prisoners. Instead of the fight they expected, they were greeted by a British officer waving his cap and gleefully announcing that he was ready to hand over all of his captors as prisoners of war.

On another occasion a group of British began to attack a fort held by a few hundred Italians only to be met outside its gates by a bemedaled Italian general. Signaling a truce, he asked to see the British general. He was told that there was no general in the group. A British colonel came forward to negotiate. The Italian said that he was unhappily forced to surrender because his men had no ammunition. When the formalities were finished and the British entered the fort, they found enough ammunition to support a whole division through a long siege.

In all the eulogies of General Wavell no one has mentioned his extreme sensitivity to the national and social feelings of the men he commands. It was a revelation to watch him mold a compact army from the various and disparate types under his command. Above all, he emphasized the nature of the fight in which they were all engaged and impressed them with the fact that they were free men fighting in the cause of freedom.

Although his army had grown appreciably, Italy's declaration of war against Greece disturbed Wavell's plans. Mussolini's attack on that country some months earlier had been planned to split the British forces and to divert the energies of the army of the Nile. In this design it was not successful but it did serve to prevent sizable British reinforcements from being sent to Africa and dictated a campaign that would have to be carried out by what was still a small army. In this contingency it was the British navy that saved the day. On November 11, while the Italians were still consolidating their forces at Sidi Barrani, bombers carried by the aircraft carriers Eagle and Illustrious sank a large part of the Italian fleet in a daring action in the port of Taranto. Ships of the Littoria and Conte di Cavour classes, as well as many minor vessels, were sent to the bottom.

This naval action was extremely valuable to Wavell, for it made it possible for the British and their allies to make their attack on the Italians near the sea under the protection of the guns of the British fleet. Wavell and Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham organized a joint fleet and army strategy. The Libyan campaign would have been next to impossible had not the Italian navy been put out of action at Taranto.

The fleet and the army of the Nile were in continual cooperation. Cruisers first dashed along the coast to soften Italian resistance; later, when the army advanced, the ships accompanied it, protecting its northern wing. This arrangement enabled Wavell's army to make turning and flanking movements repeatedly, secure in the knowledge that the guns of the fleet would block any counteraction by the Fascists. Following a battle, the fleet unloaded foodstuffs, water, and ammunition, and took prisoners on board.

When the campaign started the British were outnumbered by the enemy, but the army of the Nile was perfectly trained and armed. In his order of the day before the battle of Sidi Barrani, December 9, Wavell told his men: "In everything but numbers we are superior to the enemy. We are more highly trained, we shoot straighter, we have better equipment. Above all, we have stouter

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hearts, greater traditions, and we are fighting in a worthier cause. . . ."

The whole attack was prepared in the greatest secrecy. Not only were the movements of the British unknown to the Fascists, but the Fascists were confused by a huge dummy camp, where wooden tanks and worthless trucks gave the impression of freshly arriving troops. Under the orders of Major General Michael O'Moore Creagh, the real armored division traveled at high speed by night, and halted five miles from the two-mile barbed-wire defense which surrounded the tank ditches and walls protecting the four great forts.

The crews of the motorized army slept near their tanks in the cold desert night, a whirlwind of sand blowing around them. Suddenly, at dawn, the R. A. F. started bombing as the first line of light tanks moved to the rear entrances of the forts. The guns of the navy roared, raising clouds of sand as they fired; a second line of battle tanks followed, thundering along at a terrific pace, firing heavy guns. A third reserve line followed quickly. The Italians replied with cannon, Bren-guns and anti-tank fire. The high quality of the armored plate of the most modern British caterpillars, the bravery of Wavell's army, and above all the surprise and speed of the violent attack soon crushed the Fascist defense; after two days' fight a white flag was run up on the main fortress.

A rapid flank movement, carried out with tanks and Bren-carriers in cooperation with the navy's guns, cut off the retreat of the Fascist garrison. On December 11 the victory was complete; the British and their allies had conquered the main Italian fort of the desert, and taken 40,000 prisoners, including high officials. The equipment seized was enormous: Sidi Barrani had been prepared as a base for a future attack and as a storehouse of all ammunition, armament, and foodstuffs required by the Fascist army for the invasion of Egypt. Two thousand six-wheel lorries, 1,200 tanks, Bren-carriers, desert light cars, and twenty airplanes were taken over by the British. A large part of that equipment, especially the Bren guns, was shipped to Greece; the vehicles and the rest of the supplies are now being used by the British in Africa and some of the munitions marked by the Italians "For Abyssinia" have actually reached that country —in the hands of Haile Selassie and his followers. The British did not have enough experts to teach their soldiers how to use all the anti-aircraft guns captured from the Italians.

Sidi Barrani was the key position of the Italians. After the downfall of these forts, the British pushed on and conquered Solum, and, always with the valuable help of the navy, moved on to Bardia, Tobruk, and Bengazi, taking an enormous stock of equipment and more than 150,000 prisoners.

If the British fleet is undisturbed in its cooperation with the desert forces, the war in Libya will end with the capture of the remainder of the Fascist army, those Blackshirt legions driven by Mussolini to "live one day like a lion, rather than a thousand years like a lamb."

Labor: 1918 and 1941

BY ROSE M. STEIN

NOW we have another board—the National Defense Mediation Board. The headlines which greeted announcement of the new agency were most reassuring. Distressed souls led by earlier headlines to believe that our own and Britain's security were being jeopardized by strikes, had good reason to heave sighs of relief. No one else had any bona fide cause for disappointment. It is a good board. The three public representatives are men of the highest caliber, and the fact that industry and labor recommended top leaders from their respective ranks shows that both sides are taking the matter seriously and will make a genuine effort to cooperate. But despite competence and good intentions the board will fail unless there is much more willingness than has so far been shown to approach the problem of labor relations on the basis of conditions in 1941, rather than on conditions as they were in 1918.

Labor's status has undergone significant change in the intervening two decades or more. To ignore this change is as absurd as it would be to ignore the advance in production methods during the same period. No one in his right mind would suggest going back technologically. An amazing number of people appear eager to go back sociologically. But it cannot be done. In 1918, when a similar board was appointed, most of the mass-production industries had no union organization whatever. Consequently when the American Federation of Labor agreed to refrain from organizing non-union shops it made no great sacrifice. Inadequate though they were, the shop councils set up by the 1918 War Labor Board for the adjustment of grievances was a considerable advance over no bargaining machinery at all. In some instances they paved the way for post-war unionization, but to a much greater extent they gave impetus to a drive to promote the Employee Representation Plan, more widely known as the company union, a move which caused no end of

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trouble during the heyday of its revival under the National Industrial Recovery Act. The whole War Labor Board machinery was a makeshift affair, concocted under stress and strain, and considering the difficulties it faced, it did a magnificent job. But no such stress or strain characterizes the current scene, the alarming tone of the nation's press notwithstanding. Nearly all of the defense industries have union organization and established collective-bargaining procedures. These procedures have not broken down.

The extent of strikes and their effect on production have been as exaggerated as the reports of Mark Twain's death. This is done by the simple device of featuring every minute squabble in alarming headlines, and by reporting it as tying up so many million dollars' worth of defense orders. When authoritative data were offered to counteract the alarm spread by the fourth estate, the press simply refused to accept them on the ground that such facts do not coincide with the public's impression. Latest figures on current strikes, compiled by the *United States News,* which is not exactly partial to labor, show that approximately 40,000 workers are involved. There are over 40,000,000 workers engaged in American industry. This means a stoppage of one-tenth of one per cent. In terms of defense industries alone, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates the ratio to be one-fourth of one per cent. Even where the effect of tied-up plants on related production is taken into account, the situation as a whole is not serious. Machines themselves cannot operate without some break. And it is even more difficult for so many humans to work without interruption. An occasional strike is probably an excellent safety valve for an industrial machine in high gear.

Nevertheless, the need to avoid or reduce work stoppages is not questioned. Labor is among the first to agree to this. The notion that workers want to strike, or that union leaders want to promote strikes, is as silly as it is unfounded. Strikes are a form of war. They are costly and full of risks. With very few exceptions labor engages in them only for good reason and as a last resort. It is therefore pertinent to inquire into the underlying cause of recent strikes. Those which arose out of jurisdictional disputes, or other minor grievances, may well be classed as unwarranted, and no doubt the new board will go a long way toward curbing them. But even now these are neither widespread nor out of hand. By far the largest number of recent strikes have been waged in an effort to establish collective bargaining. That was the main issue in the most important disputes: Vultee, Bethlehem, and Allis-Chalmers. Establishment of this principle is a prerequisite to harmonious employer-employee relations, without which no amount of pressure from whatever source can achieve the degree of industrial productivity which the times demand. Collective bargaining has been established by law, ratified by the Supreme Court, and accepted by a majority of America's mass-production industries and by public opinion. Nevertheless, a few die-hard employers are resisting it. This is the group against whom labor is waging its fight. Is it justified in doing so?

From the earliest rumblings of the industrial revolution down to the present, labor has always pressed for advantages in times of industrial upswing and industry has always endeavored to reduce labor's gains in times of unemployment and depression. At the moment, production is at its peak and labor is unquestionably trying to advance its position by seeking union recognition from recalcitrant employers. There can be no question about the validity of this endeavor, since it merely aims to effectuate what is already public policy. Neither can there be any doubt that the employers who are refusing to deal with unions are defying public policy. The only question is whether the strike is a proper instrument, under present conditions, for settling this issue.

Philip Murray

Granting that strikes should be reduced to a minimum, by what means should this end be sought? Without a doubt a large element of conservative opinion both in and out of Congress would have preferred complete prohibition of strikes by law. But any such attempt unquestionably would have led to increased strife. Besides, such action was opposed not only by all branches of labor and the Administration but by industry. Employers would favor an anti-strike measure if they could get a simon-pure brand. But they would rather suffer the ills they have than fly into the arms of another governmental agency set up by law and enforced as conscientiously as are the Railway Mediation and Labor Relations laws. The possibility of Congressional action, however, has been and is being utilized as a club over the heads of labor and the Administration in an effort to hold them in line.

Now that a board has been created, how far can it go toward solving the problem? If it attempts to freeze the status quo either in wages or in organization it will get exactly nowhere. As one top-ranking union official said: "We may be chilled a bit, but we'll never freeze." Much has been made of the argument that labor should not take advantage of the emergency to advance its cause. On the surface this appears logical. But labor's answer is also logical. In any other period of production upswing, it says in effect, there would be no question about the right to establish long-overdue union recognition while labor's bargaining power is strong. To surrender this opportunity now is to allow industry, already the beneficiary of the defense program by way of increased profits, to

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benefit further through curbs on labor. British labor has made no such surrender; why should American labor surrender? To do so would mean freezing the status quo in organization as a reward to a small group of "wilful men" for their refusal to abide by the law of the land; it would mean capitulation to a few rebels in industry at the expense of their employees and at the expense of that larger section of industry which has shown its readiness to deal with unions.

This, no doubt, is precisely what industry expects of the board. But with the Murray-Kennedy, Meany-Harrison labor team on it, to say nothing of the liberal character of the rest of the board and of the temper of labor's rank and file, unionization is not likely to be placed on ice. However, should the board attempt to force dissident employers to deal with unions, it will probably be defied, as were the labor boards created by executive order during the early days of the New Deal, prior to passage of the Wagner Act.

The whole problem is far too complex for any single agency to solve. It is steeped in tradition and fear, and unless these are uprooted, not only the immediate fate of labor but the fate of the democratic way of life is at stake. Privilege is stubbornly resisting adjustments in the economy which advancing technology and the changing world scene render imperative. Outwardly, and for the moment, this resistance takes the form of a concerted effort to check further labor organization. But it may take other forms. Its roots are deep and imbedded in mortal fear that labor is gaining political and economic power, that in consequence the federal Administration is now virtually a labor government, that the British government is likewise dominated by labor, and that a post-war Anglo-American socialist *anschluss* is on the horizon.

It is of little avail to point out that neither the rank and file nor the vast majority of responsible leaders of American labor have any hidden scheme or overpowering desire for changing the economic system; that, traditionally, America's labor movement has hewed closely to plain and simple trade-unionism, and this rests upon full acceptance of the capitalist system; and that advocates of a more radical program succeed in stirring up some ferment but are eventually eased out. Facts are of little help because fear is a psychosis. If the National Defense Mediation Board makes any headway toward ending this malady it will deserve lasting gratitude.

A New World Literature

II. MODERN POETRY OF AMERICA HISPANA

BY ALFONSO REYES

Alfonso Reyes is the Hispano-American man of letters perhaps most universally respected and loved by all countries, all generations, all political camps (except the fascists) in his world. This recognition by a continent and a half torn by literary factions, has been won, without compromise, by his never hurrying the ripe maturity of his expression and by a lifetime of sensitive encouragement of every fresh poetic voice in his language. Reyes was born in Monterrey, Mexico, in 1889, the son of a general in the army of Porfirio Díaz, in spite of which he sided in 1910 with the revolution headed by Madero. His talent as a poet was recognized early. Successive governments kept him abroad in the diplomatic service of his country; in Madrid, Paris, and later as Ambassador in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, he did more than any other single man (except perhaps José Vasconcelos, also a Mexican) during the period between the world wars to foster close cultural relations between the Spanish-speaking republics and Brazil. He distinguished himself, as he grew older, as the champion of the younger generation of revolutionary poets. Reyes is one of the finest of living literary critics and belongs to the top flight of poets in his language (by far the finest company of poets in the world today). His prose *"Visión de Anáhuac,"* a portrait of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán, now Mexico City, on the eve of its capture by Cortés, has been called by Gabriela Mistral the finest single piece of Hispano-American prose. His studies of Góngora and other classic writers of Spain are themselves classic. But his preeminence is as a poet. Reyes belongs to the Hispano-American writers who stress their Latin rather than their Indian origin. On this account he has been called a classicist. But the temperament of Reyes is profoundly American, and Mexican: which means that the Indian element is not lacking. Nowhere is this more manifest than in his poetic drama, *"Ifigenia Cruel"* (1924), in which he succeeds in transfiguring without deforming a classic theme in order to express a deeply American vision. This continuity from classic roots to the modern soul of Mexican America makes Reyes one of the masters of American letters.—W. F.

THE Hispano-American character begins to make itself felt from the first period of the colony. Literature had already given an unconscious voice to it with the Mexican Ruiz de Alarcón who brought to the Spanish comedy of the seventeenth century a nuance known then as "the strangeness." But Hispano-American letters become intrinsically important only in the nineteenth century with the political independence of the republics. (Since Brazil speaks Portuguese, we shall omit

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it from this survey, although its separate literary course is strictly parallel to ours.)

With the movement called Modernism, which extended to the beginnings of this century, Hispano-American literature achieves true personality and its own place in the sun. The importance of this poetic movement has obscured previous phases and, above all, has made us forget its contribution to Spanish prose as well as verse. The truth is (and has not been sufficiently examined) that an American character came earlier to our prose. From the dawn of the nineteenth century, American prose, already differentiated from Spanish by the social spectacle it portrayed, reveals fresh technical preoccupations. At times, as in the Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento,* there is the effort for a new expression. At times, as with the Ecuadoran Montalvo, there is a harking back to the Hispanic models of the "*Siglo de Oro.*" While the peninsular Spanish prose became romantic, "costume," or academic, the continental Spanish prose (our own) revealed in Sarmiento a constant innovation spurred by "the urgent rhythm of thought," and in Montalvo a revival of the virile accents of Quevedo, then extinct in Spain.

The new spirit in Spain dates from the so-called "generation of '98"; the new spirit in America from the 1880's. The two revolutions have different impulses, and presently move upon each other. In Spain, the disaster of the war with the United States inspired a confrontation with the Spanish reality cleansed of the false perspectives of a lost empire (although aesthetic reform was not neglected). In America, the revolution is at first aesthetic, inclined toward a universalism that for the moment removes it from American things or, when it casually touches them, gives them a light twist of style. In this sense, Rodó,** speaking of the "*Prosas Profanas*" of Rubén Darío, was right when he said: "Darío is no poet of America." The refinements of Modernism had detached him from the crude national realities; from which indeed he wanted to escape. His universalism fused frontiers. His ambition to scale the greatest heights made him conceal all reference to the little hill he lived on. The Modernist poet longed to be a citizen of the world—or of Paris, the literary capital of the world which he might never even have seen; or he proclaimed himself the dweller of some abstract legendary country. Modernism, indeed, appears as a negation of the theories of Taine and Buckle on the molding influence of the milieu. Modernism is retaliation on a milieu.

Before Modernism, our poetry is sub-romantic and follows a nineteenth-century tradition. It had finally isolated itself from the world and was dying of scurvy. France overwhelmed, shook, and transformed it. It is usual to say that Modernism was the unexpected, paradoxical child of French Symbolism. But the seed comes from farther off and is nourished with all the waters of the slope of Hugo: romantic, parnassian, and decadent.

It is fairly sure that in 1888, not Silva, not Casal, not Darío, knew the Symbolists of France. In the precursors there is no reflection of Mallarmé. On the other hand, there are accents of Hugo, Musset, Nerval, Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, Banville, Baudelaire, Hérédia, Coppée, Verlaine, Moréas; and even of minor men like Arvers, Bouilhet, Mendés, whom we no longer read and who perhaps best explain the formation of our poets. There are traces of other lands: of Poe, Walt Whitman, Heine, Leopardi, D'Annunzio, Rossetti, Wilde—even of the Scandinavian myths. But these foreign treasures came in French forms or France pointed them out to Modernism.

It is hard to assay the transfusion of French spirit in our Modernism. In these distant contaminations there is always a coefficient of error, although of fecund error; we wish to imitate, and without wanting to we transform. France brought a universal touch and our poetry was freed by it and came into a relation with the world. French seemed the inevitable language of thought and image. Modernism opened a window on this France; and air came in from the immense horizons, making us forget or see within a prism of refraction what we had in our own house. There was suffused into our poetry the France of Versailles, modern France, Greek France, not to name certain effluvia of Ophir and Golconda. Our poetry was peopled with fabulous *princesitas,* with madrigalesque abbots, with exotic viscounts, with an antiquity first parnassian, then sensual. Rubén Darío, master of the classic myths, also exclaimed: "Oh, Heliogabalus, whose court—gold, silk, marble—my dreams remember." And he adds: "Only the pre-Conquest America is stuff for poetry. The rest is yours, democrat Walt Whitman." Nevertheless, he evolves, faces the world, finds a way to sing even the president of a republic—an unpredictable issue from his beginnings.

To articulate the new sensibility and the archaic imagery, the molds of verse had to be transfigured, the language shaken up to free its frozen resources. Certain gallicisms crept in, to the scandal of the purists. But today we see that the Modernists were faithful enough to the genius of the language. They went no farther than the Italianates of the Spanish Renaissance, and with equally inspiring results. Besides a few neologisms, forgotten words were sought in the traditional treasury; buried metric forms were revived; new rhythms were tried out, and above all verse was conceded a great elasticity of accent. Syntactic audacities were practiced; grammatical forms that had lost their savor were dropped. And it all was naturalized to the American climates. With subject and metaphor renewed, the language acquired fluidity and richness. There had been ankylosis; now it was corrected. There had been old

* Author of "*Facundo,*" often called the first great Argentine novel, although it tells the story of an actual *caudillo.*—Tr.

** José Enrique Rodó, the famous Uruguayan essayist whose "*Ariel*" opposed the United States as "Caliban" to America Hispana.—Tr.

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stuffy "darings" that were nothing but "poetic license," a crude permission to drag out or curtail words. This license was scrapped; liberty was conquered.

Literary "periods" are tools for interpretation. Modernism, geared with other tendencies, was crossed by unassimilable paths. Of one of its indisputable creators, Gutiérrez Nájera, the Mexican scholar Justo Sierra could say: "He was the autumn flower of the Mexican romantics." Zorilla de San Martín, contemporary of the first Modernists, could never be associated with them. His *"Tabaré,"* a story of a sentimental savage, son of an Indian and a white woman (the one poem of indigenous subject that survives from Mexico to La Plata) did not appear until 1886. Compared frivolously with Longfellow's "Hiawatha," it is different in intent and character. Every Hispano-American has read it. Its formal excellence is high; and it links up with those notions of the "noble savage" which Europe ruminated long before Rousseau made a system of them.

Salvador Díaz Mirón (1853-1928) also escapes strict classification, except that some judge him the most perfect poet of Mexico and others merely concede that he wrote the most perfect verse. Transition from his first to his second phase meant to leave an oratorical and emphatic romanticism for a poetry at once esoteric and Horatian (paradoxical as that may seem); and on the way he passed by a realism that was often grotesque in its aberrations. In his first manner he made fashionable the pugnacious cries, the sleazy antitheses, that corrupted all the American literatures; and in his final period he became past master in technical problems airily solved; perpetually dissatisfied the while, feeling himself inferior to his ideal, however superior he felt to others. Díaz Mirón recalls the aesthetic tragedy of Mallarmé: no one could emulate him and he could emulate no one. His enigmas and solutions were fruits of solitary investigations, although at times they passed into the purest classic forms. Great tamer of words, he assaulted the images of the senses with a power of vernacular divination seldom equaled. He is exemplary as both a success and a failure. Some have tried to see in him that false figure of their own youth: the scourge of tyrants, the paladin of liberators. It is all nonsense: his "tyrant" was a figure of speech; the one tyrant he truly fought was the limitation of aesthetic language. And the one liberty he loved was that glimpsed beyond a tunnel of voluntary metric obstacles. His was the intimate drama of poetry: Jacob wrestling with the Angel, the duel between thought and expression.

Another Mexican poet, Manuel José Othón (1859-1906), born under the aegis of Núñez de Arce, likewise overflows the schools and cannot be housed under Modernism. His fathers are Luis de León and Virgil; from the great Spanish mystic he inherited the Catholic chains and the bright serenity, from the Roman the dove-cooings and the love of nature. His rural pantheism must not be confounded with the bucolic; it has no lyric shepherds. The land itself speaks, as in Saint John of the Cross: *"la soledad sonora."* In this quality, he has never been surpassed. The brilliant landscapism for instance of our young Mexican poet, Carlos Pellicer, is one of symbols; whereas Othón's is one of *beings.* The river raises its breast and intones its psalmody, the water bubbles dialogues with the wind and the leaves; the eagles are incrusted in the burning sky "like rivets burying themselves slowly"; the galloping growing corn rends the immobility of the desert. And suddenly, within desolation, a savage love grows, adventure of female, sand, rock, and *lianas,* moving the poet to a voice of love and hate close to the grave register of Baudelaire.

There is no space to analyze the musical sequence of Luis G. Urbina (1867-1934), also Mexican, in whose work at times a verse or even a short poem has the nature of a single fluid word. Strictly a contemporary of Darío, his plaint comes from deep and far ("the old tear" of his poem) and crosses the Modernist sea solitarily, sweetly, in its own light romantic skiff.

Therefore, it is clear that chronologies do not coincide with artists. Let us return to Modernism. Its creators are considered to be the Cuban José Martí (1853-95), the Mexican Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera (1859-95), the Colombian José Asunción Silva (1860-96), and the Cuban Julián del Casal (1863-93). All of them dead between the ages of thirty and forty-two, they represent a poetry of youthful temperature.

Martí in *"Ismaelillo"* and *"Versos Sencillos"* is both intense and tender. Direct attack and a marvelous simplicity give grace to his emotions of a father, which have nothing in common with the vulgarity, "homey" and humanitarian, of Juan de Dios Peza, our famous "domestic poet." Reading Martí one cannot free oneself of the image of a blade razor-fine and rigid that cuts the heart. Nevertheless, despite the importance of his poetry, his prose as orator, essayist, and polemist is incomparably better. With it the Spanish language makes new conquests. Martí was one of the richest literary natures of America. And yet in great part his work, like his life, was sacrificed to the apostolate of national freedom.* His art remained one of lightning flashes, each flash revealing and hiding unexplored landscapes. Son of sorrow, he never lost his smile; brave as a lion, he was not ashamed of his tears.

In Guitiérrez Nájera, we find clearly articulated the romantic and the French strains. He was also a great proseman. The tenderness of his verse is more malicious and more conscious than that of his Cuban brother. The eroticism which was held against him seems slight to us today. Later, he can be called "guest at the banquet of madness" because of the black and tragic rifts in his

* Martí was killed in the Cuban war of independence while conducting a landing party against the Spaniards.—Tr.

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well-tooled strophes. Effusive, musical, melancholy, elegant, he gradually evolved toward a classical fulness which scarcely fitted his last poems and which the beginning of his work had already projected, in its passion for composing in a sequence of coherent metaphors. Without knowing it, he discovered for himself the Symbolist formula: "To regain in music the birthright of poetry"; as in the external musicality of his ode to *La Corregidora* and in his ineffable thirst before the "Serenade" of Schubert. "Thus, if it could, would my soul speak."

In Silva, there is rhythmic inventiveness, delicacy and wisdom, pessimism, deliquescence, hyperaesthesia like that of Des Esseintes, caprice, and even folklore. *"Nocturno"* is a contagious unending plaint prolonging in verse the tearful *"María"* of Silva's compatriot, Jorge Isaacs. This unfortunate and beautiful dandy had the gift of tears. His daring verbal repetitions in the imitated harmonics of a sob relate him to Poe. He can be humorous too, as in *"Gotas Amargas,"* and he recalls songs and games of his childhood. But his fate is inexorable and he moves to suicide, fascinated by the fraternal shade which calls him from beyond the tomb.

[*This is the first part of an article on The Modern Poetry of America Hispana. The second part will appear next week.*]

Everybody's Business

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

Profits, Prices, Wages

THE theme-song of the 1940 corporation reports, which for some weeks past have been piling up on my desk, is the burden of taxation. Indeed, so much stress is placed on this subject that casual reading almost leaves the impression of whole segments of business sinking into the red. Only after more careful inspection does one discover that greatly increased tax bills are being met out of greatly increased profits and that most corporations, after providing for the demands of the Treasury, have larger sums available for their shareholders than in 1939, which wasn't exactly a lean year either.

A useful compilation of the National City Bank summarizing the financial results of 925 leading manufacturing corporations shows us that 1940 cannot be accurately described as a period of "profitless prosperity." Net profits of these corporations, after deducting depreciation, interest, *taxes,* and all other charges, but before dividends, amounted to $1,554,280,000 compared with $1,225,069,000 in 1939. This represents an increase of 26.9 per cent. In terms of return on net worth it means a rise from 8.4 per cent in 1939 to 10.5 per cent in 1940. This seems a pretty generous yield on "risk" capital, especially at a time when "safe" long-term bonds give an income of less than 3 per cent.

The following table shows how some leading industrial groups have fared in the past year.

No. of corporations in group	*Per cent change in profits compared with 1939*	*Per cent return on net worth 1939*	*1940*
111 Food produucts	+ 2.7	7.7	7.8
39 Beverages	— 2.0	12.9	12.0
19 Tobacco products	+ 3.6	13.6	13.9
101 Textile	+ 32.9	5.9	7.7
17 Rubber	— 0.6	9.4	8.9
59 Chemical	+ 3.0	13.7	13.7
43 Iron and Steel	+ 98.5	4.4	8.5
77 Machinery	+ 68.5	8.5	13.9
29 Electrical equipment ..	+ 36.1	8.9	11.8
14 Automobiles	+ 9.9	17.2	18.4
38 Auto equipment	+ 46.4	13.0	18.1
20 Railroad equipment ..	+ 241.0	2.2	6.0
18 Aircraft and parts ...	+ 290.0	10.2	25.7

It will be noticed that, except for textiles, the groups enjoying large percentage increases in profits all fall into the capital goods class. They are the industries which have received the first and most direct impetus from the defense program. Textiles have received a fillip from the same source, owing to orders for uniforms, blankets, and other military necessities. Industries catering to consumers, on the other hand, show smaller improvement in net profits and even, in some cases, modest recessions. Many of the corporations in this category actually earned rather higher gross profits than the year before but, after paying taxes, found their net somewhat reduced. This hardship, however, is mitigated by the fact that their earnings in 1939 were fairly substantial.

During the current year, even allowing for the yet higher corporate taxation expected shortly, a further improvement in profits is forecast for both industrial categories. Thanks to defense orders, the heavy industries will be working near capacity throughout the year, instead of for a few months only as in 1940, and with overheads spread over a much larger output, they should be able to effect additional savings in production costs. Republic Steel, for instance, is now working at 100 per cent of capacity while it is geared to operate at a profit when producing only 65 per cent of its maximum tonnage. As a result, one of its directors has forecast earnings 25 per cent better than last year, even allowing for additional 1941 taxes.

Increased payrolls in the defense industries are now beginning to be reflected in heavier demands on the consumer goods manufacturers and on the retailers. Sales of automobiles in the current quarter may establish an all-time record; food companies are reporting sales volume at around 10 per cent better than a year ago; and department stores, which normally make all their profits between July and December, are expecting to show net earnings for the first half of this year, after the best spring business in a decade.

This forecast of profit trends would be incomplete, however, if it left out of account the possibility of both higher prices and higher wages. Normally, a sellers' market, such as prevails today in many lines, would mean that extra profits attributable to capacity operations would be supplemented by the bonanza effects of rising prices. But, from the inception of the defense program, the Administration has been endeavoring to hold down prices by persuasion and publicity coupled with an implied threat that failure of these methods would lead to more formal controls. In respect of a number

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of leading commodities, including steel and copper, it has achieved considerable success. But the whole industrial field is an enormous beat to cover and, while the attention of the small band of price policemen in Washington has been concentrated on key situations, quotations for quite a list of articles have been moving out of bounds. They include such varied items as carpets, china, household electrical equipment, plumbing wares, lawnmowers, bicycles, and kitchenware. Food prices, also, have been trending upward, with meats sharply higher and, perhaps most important of all from the point of view of the cost of living, rents are being steadily boosted in those areas where defense work is concentrated. In Detroit, for instance, rents are estimated at 10 per cent above a year ago and in some shipbuilding centers still larger increases have been reported.

The impact of this upswing of prices on the pay envelopes of the nation forms part of the background of the present widespread demand for improved wages. Yet the granting of such demands is likely to prove an excuse for further price boosting and we may start the old vicious circle in which wages chase prices but, except in a few strategically placed trades, never succeed in catching up. It seems high time, therefore, that Washington's price police were reinforced and given power to make arrests.

We must recognize, however, that a definite ceiling could not be imposed on prices without some limitation of wage increases. This idea may be unpopular in labor circles but it is worth noting that since 1929 falling prices have made a bigger contribution to the workers' standard of living than have higher wages. For while average weekly "money" wages in the manufacturing industries have risen 5.8 per cent during this period, the decline in the cost of living has meant an improvement of 23.2 per cent in "real" weekly earnings. It would be an ill service to the workers as a whole if favorably placed groups pushed wage demands to a point where the cost of living began once again to overtake earnings. This does not mean freezing present standards altogether, for in many industries, and steel is an example, the present scale of profits would permit some increase in wages without necessitating any rise in prices. Nevertheless wise labor strategy at the present time would confine itself to moderate demands and not press for all that the traffic may seem able to bear.

Correction. In Everybody's Business of March 15, a typographical error turned Mr. Maurice Feldman, the Austrian economist and journalist, into Maurice Seldman.

In the Wind

SIGNS OF RAPPROCHEMENT between followers of Stalin and Trotsky have been numerous since the death of the exiled revolutionist. In New York City the two groups sponsored a joint slate in the Cafeteria Workers' Union, and both supported the candidate of the left wing of the American Labor Party in the recent special Congressional election. In Europe, according to *Inside Germany Reports,* persons formerly reviled as Trotskyites are now sought out as allies by Comintern agents. The same source asserts that an official order has gone out from Moscow informing Stalinist leaders that the death of Trotsky can be made the occasion for a new program of unity.

A POLICE ROUNDUP in Gainesville, Florida, on March 15, netted "six persons and a Negress," according to the Gainesville *Daily Sun.*

THE UNKINDEST CUT: According to those who know William Randolph Hearst, his real objection to Orson Welles's "Citizen Kane" is not the film's treatment of the publisher's career, but the scene which shows him dead. Hearst does not allow death to be mentioned in his hearing.

COMMENTING on the current controversies over education in New York State, Senator Clifford Hastings told the Troy *Record:* "I say that the parent has a problem when the child comes home, with concepts instilled into his mind, that are contrary to everything that he knows to be based on fact or evidence. If a parent tries to contravene the teachings which the child has received in one particular thing, he is encouraging the child to disregard everything that he is taught in school. Just as failure to enforce one criminal law encourages all criminals to commit acts which violate the law."

NAZIS IN AMERICA are making a strenuous effort to speak and write in a native idiom. The latest issue of *Facts in Review,* German newsletter, speaks of "carrying water to Lake Superior, coal to Pittsburgh, religion to Rome."

GERMAN OFFICIALS in conquered Norway face a serious dilemma. Shortly after the occupation, they forbade the owning of firearms of any kind by Norwegians. The result is that wolves have destroyed some 47,000 kroner worth of sheep. To save the sheep, whose wool and meat go largely to Germany, the Nazis must restore guns to the Norwegians, who, in turn, are likely to use them on the Nazis.

WALL STREET men who have recently acquired an interest in the Harvill Die Casting Corporation are not entirely displeased by the strike at its Los Angeles plant. The shut-down has served to advertise the key importance of this rapidly growing company to the West Coast aviation industry and as a result the price of its stock is rising.

STATION CKCL, of Toronto, announced on March 19 that "Wendell Willkie, unelected President of the United States," would soon visit Canada.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN'S "Sports Calendar," an advertisement regularly placed in New York hotel guides, recently included a notice of a mass meeting of the Communist Party, sandwiched between notices of a professional hockey game and a college basketball tournament.

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind —either clippings with source and date or stories that can be easily authenticated. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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A Native at Large

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

Spring Fervor

IT IS full spring by now at Camp Shelby near Hattiesburg, Mississippi, which a sentimental Southerner named for his wife when he came to cut down the long-leaf pine trees. The girls in the Baptist college and the state teachers' college and the silk mill there have put on wash dresses and all look very fresh and sweet in them. In Columbus, Georgia, close to Fort Benning, the white dogwood and the purple wisteria are blooming together. Wash dresses and wisteria come regularly every year, but this is the spring of defense and as thick as the crocuses are the Yankee boys in khaki in Southern camps. Their great-grandfathers were down that way, but Sherman kept them busy—so the girls complained—stealing chickens and burning barns. Their fathers were down that way too. But never before has there been such a national planning to put the Northern boys by the Southern girls. That may mean the unity about which the President talks so confidently. It may mean anything in the spring.

Already, indeed, the conjunction of South and camp has meant the widest variety of meetings. Not only are the boys bivouacked in a strange land; in many places the land has become strange for the Southerners. Stark, Florida, was too small even to rate the listing of its population in the *World Almanac* before Camp Blanding was built. Alexandria, Louisiana, was a sleepy town living on the presence of the institutionalized unfortunates and on the plantations along the Red River before two new camps and an expanding old one grew around it. Fayetteville, North Carolina, was quiet around Scotch memories and a slot-machine promoter before Fort Bragg grew under hammers and commands with a livelier noisiness than woodpeckers and jays had made in the empty land before. Now they and other small towns are almost as changed as the camps. New civilians have come as well as new soldiers. Even town loafers have gone to work or found their loafing places vastly disturbed. And one thing is certain. If Carl Carmer of New York State, after residence in Alabama, was exact in his observation that though "the Eastern miss counts herself fortunate to have one beau, the Southern is not content with a dozen," the Southern miss's problem may soon be solved. And upon the terms of its solution may depend a more romantically united—or a more bitterly divided—United States of America.

The problem of boys and girls is not being entirely neglected. Some such cities as staid old Richmond have devised plans, inaccurately called drafting, to provide dancing partners for the soldiers at Camp Lee. In another large city close to big defense concentrations the local merchants have been building good will by sponsoring dances for the boys in brown—with the help of girls wearing every color in the world. Other towns have not been so hospitable. Householders can be patriotic and still not like it when officers' families push up the old-fashioned level of rents. Some men of business have not given dances but instead have doubled the price of beer and soft drinks in the places where the nickelodeons play. Soldiers in some places have had to take their girls and their fun where they found them, which was occasionally in strange places.

It is entirely possible for a chamber of commerce to be eager for a camp without the local boys liking it when the regiments pour into town and also into the clubs and the dances and the parlors and the gardens. Pensacola has had a longer time to build its relationships with the nation's defenders than most towns have. It is the mother-in-law of the navy, but the local males definitely do not like their flying-cadet competition. They might feel, I think, a greater unity with the girls left behind in Rhode Island and Vermont. The Southern boy sees and suffers. But the girls up where there is snow still lying on the ground know by both intuition and report that Southern girls at their worst have a longer spring in which to work. That is not a knowledge which makes a girl happy in Maine.

The President and the Congress have not presented a solution for this problem. But Washington is not unaware of it. An able, energetic New Yorker called me from Washington the other day about it. He had been pulled from private life to deal with it, among other human problems in defense.

"This thing," he told me, "can create fine feelings or bad ones. North and South—"

I know he is right. Also, I know it is already spring in Hattiesburg. And when it is spring there or in Columbus or Columbia, it never seems quite so far home to the Northern boys. It may be sentimental in these grim times to talk about wisteria and wash dresses instead of about men and machines and maneuvers. It is still a sentimental South as well as a warm one. And when you mobilize an army, it marches to more things than war.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Song

BY W. H. AUDEN

Jumbled in the common box
Of their dark stupidity,
Orchid, swan and Caesar lie;
Time that tires of everyone
Has corroded all the locks,
Thrown away the key for fun.

In its cleft the torrent mocks
Prophets who in days gone by
Made a profit on each cry,
Persona grata now with none;
And a jackass language shocks
Poets who can only pun.

Silence settles on the clocks;
Nursing mothers point a sly
Index-finger at the sky,
Crimson in the setting sun;
In the valley of the fox
Gleams the barrel of a gun.

Once we could have made the docks;
Now it is too late to fly;
Once too often you and I
Did what we should not have done;
Round the rampant rugged rocks
Rude and ragged rascals run.

"Family Feeling"

IN THIS OUR LIFE. By Ellen Glasgow. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

SOMEONE like myself, who knows little of Miss Glasgow's work, must be deceived by this book until he is very far along in it. It seems, until then, like the kind of fiction we long ago lost interest in. It seems like one of those studies of middle-class family life which we used to read at our ease in a pleasantly stable world—one of those traditional, tolerably accomplished novels with lifelike enough characters and situations, but with no real power to stir or stimulate us, and no ability to linger in our memory.

But as the book proceeds, it takes on edge, it takes on weight. Its form, to be sure, is so traditional as to be uninteresting. Its style, though sometimes witty, seems serviceable and fluent rather than anything more. Its characters enact too many similar scenes and go in for too many explanatory "reflections." All the same, these things date Miss Glasgow rather than delimit her. Before we have finished her book, things have happened which do not happen by accident. We have come to know its people; we have begun to see what middle-class families are like and what, aside from consanguinity, they are the products of. Most of all we have learned how Miss Glasgow, within a familiar form, works with a special insight; and not only cuts psychological corners, but blasts social rock and storms moral fortresses. Her book tells us something about human nature and human institutions alike—a very respectable day's work, to say the least.

Miss Glasgow's approach to the Timberlake family is largely through the eyes of Asa, the father—a man of sixty tied to an invalid wife he has never loved and to a job (with his wife's rich uncle) he has never succeeded at. Dutiful and kindly in his habits, he is yet skeptical and undeceived in his thinking. The one person in the family he really loves is his married daughter Roy, and never more than when Stanley, his other daughter, blasts Roy's happiness. In terms of plot the book tells of the trouble that Stanley, who is shallow and selfish, stirs up—first in jilting her fiancé to run off with Roy's husband Peter; then in driving Peter to suicide; again, in winning back her fiancé after he has become engaged to Roy; and finally, in getting a young Negro blamed for a reckless act of her own. But the incidents of the plot are important only for their effect on the characters, for what they reveal about "family feeling," and for what they expose of family life as a middle-class institution.

There are no villains in the story; only people; which is why Miss Glasgow's study of family feeling is the more damning. Family feeling is not enough to keep Stanley from running away with her sister's husband. But on the other hand it is quite enough to make Stanley's relatives conspire to save her skin at the expense of sending an innocent young Negro to prison. It would be hard for two incidents to say more—morally speaking—about the family as a middle-class institution than these two do.

The whole book, in its modulated but merciless way, probes the social morality of the thousands of families that the Timberlakes, in their Tidewater city, represent. But Miss Glasgow comes to concepts by way of people, and her people react upon one another, in the end, as human beings. Stanley, petulant and irresistible and weak, reaching out hungrily for happiness, is not less real for being also a type; nor is Roy, proud of her strength and defiant in her courage, unreal for being a familiar species of "heroine." Asa, I think, is not so much a character as a set of values; through him Miss Glasgow is able to pass judgment on the others, and even on life. Nor is it only in his sympathy and skepticism and moral sensibility that Asa seems to speak for the author; he speaks just a little also—though not defensively—for the generation they both are part of. No study of a family can avoid being concerned with the conflict between generations.

Miss Glasgow is not only an adult novelist but, like very few others of her sex in America, an unsentimental one. She

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understands what is Southern about her people as she understands what is human about them; but though she shows sympathy, it never corrupts her judgment. Her art, I should think from my scant knowledge of it, has been overestimated, but not her astuteness. The people who could give her cards and spades on technique, or with the help of Hemingway sharpen her dialogue, or toss out whole pages from her book as wasteful or slow-moving, still could learn from her a good deal more than they could teach.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

From Peace to Peace

VERSAILLES TWENTY YEARS AFTER. By Paul Birdsall. Reynal and Hitchcock. $3.

GERMANY PREPARES FOR WAR. By Ewald Banse. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.

UNION NOW WITH BRITAIN. By Clarence K. Streit. Harper. $1.75.

ONE of the most potent weapons of German propaganda has been the ascribing of all the ills of the world and the second world war to the treaty of Versailles. It is conveniently forgotten that the first world war broke out with no treaty of Versailles to precede it and with a Germany not defeated but victorious and rapidly acquiring wealth. To learn the causes of the second world war one must go deep, not attribute them to the treaty-makers of Versailles. As long as public thought is not cleared up on this point there will be no understanding of the present situation. It is therefore most fortunate that at this moment an American historian, Paul Birdsall, should publish a well-documented and readable history of the Versailles negotiations. This excellent volume attempts a reappraisal of the forces which shaped the peace treaty. It may be called a scholarly revindication of Woodrow Wilson and his policies. It shows the immense difficulties with which Wilson's program was beset, not only (and not even primarily) because of European statesmen, but because of the isolationist and nationalistic sentiment of all peoples, especially the Americans. The argument is presented with exemplary balance of judgment and restraint of language. The book should be read by everyone who wishes to talk about the peace treaty and do more than indulge in the glib phraseology current in the past twenty years. For the legend of the treaty of Versailles has not only served as a basis for present German aggression; it has also obscured from the American public the real issues to be settled before there is any lasting peace and has allowed them an escape into a wishful, and at the same time an unexacting, sentimental pacifism. "By curious logic the inevitable European chaos which resulted from American isolation has been used as a further foundation for isolationist argument. The complete distortion of the role of the United States in the first world war and at Versailles crystallized a powerful isolationist sentiment which threatens to paralyze American foreign policy in the present increasingly critical world situation."

The leading circles in Germany did not resent the treaty of Versailles; they resented the loss of the war, the frustration of their plans to achieve in the first world war that master position which they are now trying to attain. They regarded the defeat as a temporary setback, and prepared for the resumption of the war for world domination as soon as their own preparations and the blindness of the democratic nations created a favorable situation. The plans were laid for a long time. In 1932 Ewald Banse, a German geographer and strategist who was nominated professor of military science immediately after the National Socialists came into power, published a book called *"Raum und Volk im Weltkriege,"* in which he pointed out the mistakes made in the first world war and from them drew lessons for the second. It predicted in many details the events of the present war. As soon as public attention in England was drawn to the book, the National Socialist government banned it and tried to make the appearance of an English translation impossible because, as the Germans obligingly said, it would "unfortunately give anti-German propaganda abroad occasion to throw doubt on the peace policy of the German government." The strategic theories developed by Professor Banse (and since put into effect by the German government) were then called by the National Socialists "absurd" and "senseless babblings" of an "irresponsible theorist." That the National Socialists said this is understandable; that the people in the democracies seemed to believe them is less understandable. The American publishers have now republished the book, which in its first edition (1934) attracted very little public comment.

From the past peace and the preparations for the present war our attention is inevitably drawn to the most urgent problem at the moment: the present war and the peace to follow. That the free peoples, including the United States, are threatened by a combination of ruthless aggressors is generally conceded today, even by those who refused to see the facts a year ago: the introduction of conscription and the voting of many billions for armaments and for a two-ocean navy by overwhelming majorities in Congress are the best proof of this. But to make America secure and to establish this time a lasting peace demands more than the routine resolutions appropriate to another age. It demands a courageous determination to meet an unprecedented situation by fresh thought and unprecedented action. Clarence Streit has deserved well of America and of democracy by pointing out the path which, if trod in time, would have saved the democracies of Europe and the New World from the physical and mental agonies which they are now experiencing. His suggested world federal union is, in my opinion, the logical solution of problems arising from the interdependence of all nations in the twentieth century. His new book is an answer to the problems that have developed during the past eighteen months as a result of the refusal of the democratic nations to establish a closer cooperation.

The fate of mankind for centuries to come may depend in the present crisis on right timing; steps taken too late or too half-heartedly may seal the catastrophe which they were intended to prevent. Mr. Streit submits a closely reasoned and cogent argument for action *now*. Without necessarily agreeing with every detail of his outline, this reviewer believes that it offers the only rational solution of the world crisis. Thus it is an indispensable book for every American to read and ponder. It points the way to the establishment of a society in which democracy will be safe and peace will be lasting

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everywhere. If American public opinion will accept Mr. Streit's plan for the future the mistakes which have frustrated the peace efforts of the past twenty-five years will be avoided.

HANS KOHN

Mrs. Stowe

CRUSADER IN CRINOLINE: THE LIFE OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE. By Forrest Wilson. Lippincott. $3.75.

FORREST WILSON'S manifest adoration of his heroine, which might have ensnared him in a maze of tiresome eulogy, seems to have been the spur driving him to produce a fascinating and balanced history of her life. For instead of setting out to prove that she was the foremost genius of her day, he takes that assumption as his first premise, then allows his thoughtful narrative to captivate the reader's attention.

In order to enliven a scholarly discourse with a dash of atmosphere, a biographer will occasionally open fire with a brisk description of the members of his subject's family, dismissing these unfortunate stooges as soon as they have served their turn. Mr. Wilson, shunning the treatise for the chronicle, has given just weight to the remarkable Beecher family, never obtruding upon, but never out of touch with "Hattie."

Like a number of other women of literary renown of the last century, Harriet Beecher Stowe was born into a family whose salient characteristics were fire-and-brimstone theology —and fecundity. Lyman, with his missionary spirit, hypochondria, penchant for getting married, and his son, Henry Ward, sensational pulpit orator, headed the Beecher clan, while the dominating Catherine, and even Harriet herself, ostensibly remained the weaker vessels.

Seeking fresh worlds to conquer, Lyman Beecher transplanted his family from New England to Cincinnati, and it was there that Harriet, by the skin of her teeth, and at the ripe age of twenty-four, graduated from schoolmarm spinsterhood to matrimony. Mr. Wilson contrives to imbue the story of the wedding of Harriet Beecher and Calvin Stowe with an air of authentic stuffiness; the natural outcome of spiritual affinity's transcendence of a tendency to pouchiness and premature baldness in the widower-bridegroom.

Before she had been married a year, and during her husband's absence on a European tour, Mrs. Stowe, stirred by the sordid horror of the anti-Abolition riots, entered her first plea in the press under a masculine pseudonym. However, no interest in social endeavor could withstand the pressure of keeping house and raising a number of children on an inadequate income. Fifteen years of pulling the devil by the tail, goading a lethargic husband, fighting the cholera epidemics that broke out in the stagnant summer heat, left Mrs. Stowe a rag of a woman straggling back to New England just in time to give birth to her seventh child, and prophesying an early death.

Beset with such vicissitudes, many women would have grown apathetic. But Harriet Beecher Stowe, braced by the return to her native New England and by the easing of financial tension, produced her last baby with an air of finality and fell to writing what turned out to be the last chapter of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The years in Cincinnati had left latent images, and these welled up and overflowed at the first slackening of domestic activity.

Mr. Wilson's account of the conception, execution, and undreamed of acclaim of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is irresistible. He carries the reader, as if on the crest of a wave, through the transformation of the jaded housewife into a female Messiah. In spite of his genuflections in front of what he describes as the miracle of the book, the book's most remarkable quality remains its success. As the product of a fiery conscience, of a sharp tongue partly sheathed by the mellifluous language current in Calvinistic circles, and of a deep capacity for day-dreaming, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" touched off every emotion of partisanship on the highly controversial subject of slavery.

The remainder of Harriet Beecher Stowe's long life was based on her initial and astounding success. The impulse to reform which pervaded her work she ascribed to divine inspiration, combining a tribute to her own humility with the satisfaction of leaving the final responsibility with the Almighty. Dotage overcame her before the intellectual reaction of the younger skeptics could touch her. From the dangerous anarchist of her heyday, she became an Aunt Sally for the new generation of her critics, but, ignorant of the deadly change, remained to the end queen of her dwindling realm.

Whether or not American democracy was shaped by Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Mr. Wilson almost implies that it was, "Crusader in Crinoline" stands well on its merits as the story of an amazing career.

EILEEN HOLDING

Fifty Years of Russian Labor

WORKERS BEFORE AND AFTER LENIN. By Manya Gordon. E. P. Dutton and Company. $4.

THIS book is modestly named, for it is more than a history of the Russian working class before and after the Bolshevik revolution: it is the first comprehensive social and economic history of the Soviet Union from an author possessed of the knowledge, the energy, the ability, and the desire to do the necessary preliminary work. Manya Gordon's book is that rare product—a volume of painstaking and honest research vividly presented and of equal value to expert and layman. She not only knows the Russian language but having herself at one time been a member of the Russian Social Revolutionary Party, is able to compare conditions in Tsarist Russia with conditions under the Soviet government. Her indictment of the Bolshevik regime is rendered unanswerable by her references to official Soviet data, or press reports, or pronouncements by members of the Soviet government, in substantiation of every statement. Since such evidence is only to be obtained by reading an enormous number of publications, it is perhaps not extraordinary that no other Russian-born citizen of the United States or exile in Europe has ever had the patience and energy to undertake the task.

It will surprise most readers to learn the extent of Russian labor gains and the tempo of industrial progress from 1903 to 1914. Bad as conditions were under the tsars, there was a steady improvement; under Stalin there has been an almost continuous decline. Calmly the author examines the material

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situation of the workers and peasants, the results of the Five-Year plans, the consequences of forced collectivization, the educational system, social legislation, the labor of children and women. She deals also with the liquidation under Stalin of the great handicraft and village industries which once supplied so many of the people's needs, and with the failure of the new factories to satisfy these needs. Illuminating comparisons are made between labor's slow but certain progress after 1903 and the gradual degradation, from 1928 onwards, which has brought the Russian workers and peasants back to about where they were before the abolition of serfdom in 1861. The decline in real wages over the past decade to far below the 1913 level is conclusively demonstrated.

Perhaps the most important section of the book is that relating to the changed status and functions of the trade unions. We are shown how Lenin quickly abandoned his original thesis that "the trade unions could be relied upon to produce a given number of managers." In 1921 he decided, in his own words, "to throw the whole syndicalist absurdity into the wastepaper basket," and announced that henceforth the government would itself appoint the managers of enterprises. The Bolsheviks of that period were, however, genuinely and sincerely interested in the welfare of the proletariat, and Lenin, although he found it necessary to create order out of the chaos produced by workers' control of industry, said:

"Our present government is such that the proletariat, organized to the last man, must protect itself against it. And we must use the workers' organizations for the protection of the workers against their government."

In 1928 Stalin completely reversed Lenin's policy. He gave out the slogan "extirpate trade unionism" and told the trade unions that henceforth they must "play a decisive role in the task of building socialist industry by stimulating labor productivity, labor discipline, and socialist competition." When Tomsky refused to cooperate in converting the trade unions from protectors of the working class into agencies for its exploitation, he was removed by Stalin from his post as head of the Soviet trade unions.

Today the wheel has described a full circle. The trade unions, which in 1917 were told to manage industry, and in 1921 to protect the workers from oppression by the state, are now themselves organs for the suppression and speeding up of the workers. It is treason for them to try to protect labor standards, and the state-appointed managers are the sole authority on wages, work norms, hiring, and firing. A worker who is a few minutes late on consecutive days is dismissed and may not be reemployed for six months. One must have had the experience of trying to fight one's way on to a Russian street-car to appreciate the cruelty of this decree. One must also be aware that dismissal usually means the loss of the room in which the worker and his family lives, and that there is no unemployment pay or poor relief in the Soviet Union. Unemployment is liquidated by the simple device of liquidating the unemployed. The inhuman speeding up of labor has not achieved its purpose of increasing productivity. The neglect of the human factor has its repercussion on the material factors as shown in the rapid deterioration of neglected and overdriven machinery.

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from the Soviet press and official sources, the author shows the continual downward revision of the legislation dealing with social insurance, education, and the employment of women and children. Women now work in the mines and perform the heaviest physical labor as in England in the early days of the industrial revolution. With telling effect she quotes such frank admissions as that of the Soviet journalist who wrote in *Za Industrializatziu* in 1931: "We are not in the habit of worrying about people. Rather we feel that of that bounty—people—we have more than enough."

However, Hitler's rise to power and the real menace of attack from the outside world at last led the Soviet government to recognize that perhaps, after all, there might not be enough "people—that bounty" to use as cannon fodder. The census of 1937 (the results of which were suppressed) revealed that there were between twenty and twenty-five million fewer people in the U.S.S.R. than had been expected. Famine, semi-starvation, overwork, bad housing, and a decline in the birth rate were obviously responsible, but Stalin's first remedy was the liquidation of the statisticians who had carried out the census. Then in a desperate effort to force a population increase, abortions were made illegal and *Pravda* announced that Soviet women must become record-breakers in the production of babies. Women were told to consider themselves henceforth as the Stakhanovites of the human productive machinery. But the state still fails to provide them with decent housing accommodation, or clothing and nourishment for their babies, or even rubber nipples for the babies' bottles.

No book yet written so well illustrates the truth of the bitter saying current among the Russian workers concerning their rulers: "*They* have constructed socialism for themselves." It should be required reading in the universities, and one wishes that every "friend of the Soviet Union" could be made to study it. Unfortunately, the very fact that it is so scholarly, so fully documented, objective, and free from sensationalism, makes it unlikely that it will receive the wide attention it deserves.

FREDA UTLEY

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The World of the Budds

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS. By Upton Sinclair. The Viking Press. $3.

THE sixty titles of Upton Sinclair's books and plays are honorable battle-flags commemorating a lifelong crusade against rackets and oppression and injustice of all kinds, and his skill at combining humanitarian propaganda with fiction has placed the liberals of this country under a much deeper obligation to him than most of them realize. But that the old warrior, after three or four decades of single-handed, often quixotic combats in the politico-literary arena, should turn out two novels of the breadth and objectivity of "World's End" (last year) and "Between Two Worlds"—that is a minor miracle.

With the sequel or sequels which he has obviously projected and very likely already embarked upon, these books will come closer than any other American novels to the scope and spirit of "Men of Good Will" or "The World of the Thibaults." But while Romains and Du Gard probe microscopically into the souls of their characters, leaving the history of twentieth-century Europe to weave through their lives like an undercurrent, Sinclair uses his people frankly as lenses and mirrors for observing and reflecting the events, trends, scenes, personalities of the time; while you may never thoroughly believe in his characters as men and women, you see through their eyes a stereoscopic panorama of the yesterdays that lighted so many fools the way to dusty death.

"Between Two Worlds," beginning at the close of the Versailles peace conference, where "World's End" left off, offers you a box-seat at the morbidly fascinating drama-spectacle of Europe and America in the 'twenties. Through it, you walk the streets of a dozen of the world's cities; you sit in, both before and behind the scenes, at all the principal "disarmament" conferences. You talk tête-à-tête with Lincoln Steffens, Isadora Duncan, Lloyd George, Zaharoff, Matteotti, and Mussolini (known to his early associates as The Little Pouter Pigeon), and overhear some inflammatory speeches delivered by Adolf Hitler Schicklgruber in a Munich beer-hall.

Your entree to these international didoes is provided by young and winsome Lanny Budd, son of a wealthy Connecticut munitions manufacturer and a beautiful artists' model. Like Julian Bern in "Europa," he knows everyone, goes everywhere, listens to all sides. Living among the wastrels and blue-bloods on the Riviera, he burns with a hard, gem-like flame for the beauties of music and painting, yet his generous heart and shrewd intelligence bring him intermittent qualms over the poverty and ferment beneath, and sometimes breaking through, the glittering surface of his world.

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By ascribing to him a concern for the masses and occasionally showing him among the "red" friends of his uncle Jesse Blackless, the author is clearly educating Lanny for an active role in a subsequent novel which will usher in the grimmer, more turbulent 'thirties.

Even though the book is primarily a novelized "Only Yesterday," Mr. Sinclair succeeds in making the story of Lanny Budd's worldly pilgrimage an engrossing tale in its own right. Though it dives temporarily into a slough of Dickensian caricature with the marriage of Lanny's flighty mother to the ascetic Mr. Parsifal Dingle, it recovers quickly and closes with the most dramatic picture of the October, 1929, stock-market crash that I have ever read in fiction.

It is a far, far cry from the appearance of these two voluminous novels under the imprint of the Viking Press to those days when Upton Sinclair had to publish and peddle his books himself because publishers were afraid to handle his "radical" exposés of the mistreatment of the little man. One might remark that the change is a highly encouraging sign; and, Pollyanna-wise, that perhaps the very obstacles and prejudices against which he has so long leveled a fearless pen have helped to equip him, better than any other contemporary American novelist, to serve as impresario for this tragi-comedy of two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born.

LOUIS B. SALOMON

Coroner's Inquest: A Dialogue

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Twenty Years of Independence. Edited by Robert J. Kerner. The University of California Press. $5.

HISTORY: Theories are no pastime of mine. Like most American journalists I care only for facts. Nevertheless, here is a perplexing problem: how states are born and why they die. Wouldn't your case supply a useful explanation?

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: In some ways it would—as you can see in the informing, yet delightful volume bearing my name and edited and partly written by Professor R. J. Kerner of Berkeley. Incidentally, I wish you would observe how much more he and Professor Malbone W. Graham, both in California, know of my past than the Cliveden set in England ever knew. Knowledge seems to increase with distance.

HISTORY: And what theory does your case support—Professor Laski's that the state is the government, or Professor Kelsen's that it is a system of legal norms?

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: It supports neither. There is no Czech government—except in exile; there is a system of legal rules, but the oppressors respect only their own arbitrariness.

HISTORY: Am I to understand, then, that this book is an obituary rather than a biography?

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Certainly not. Czech independence may be dead at the moment, but the Czechoslovak nation is more alive than ever. Though Philadelphia and Munich were milestones of sovereignty, the nation had developed, since the Premyslide rulers, a standard of spiritual culture and economic prosperity. Not even three centuries of Hapsburg blackout could obliterate it. As our great humanist, Jan Amos Comenius predicted in his "Testament": "... The rule

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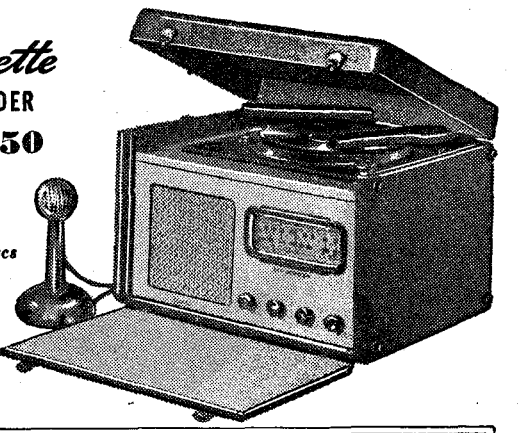

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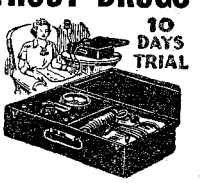

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of thy country will again return unto thee, O Czech nation!" True, it returned for only twenty years, but the trend and rhythm of events leave no doubt about the future.

HISTORY: That I grant you. But for the time being you are under the wheels of the Nazi juggernaut. I remember that Palacky—as Hans Kohn puts it—identified "the Czech cause with that of democracy" and that the President-Liberator coordinated Czech democracy with the ideal of humanism. As Professor Graham says in his masterful chapters: after a distinct break of nearly two hundred and fifty years the "resurgent Czechoslovak nationality passed out of existence on October 5, 1938." I must admit that this was the result of betrayal and not of defeat. However, don't you think the chief cause was the inclusion of nationalities of which a third were neither Czech nor Slovak?

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Possibly it was an error to create a polyglot republic. Yet this could not have been avoided entirely. Professor Joseph S. Roucek asks: "Did Czechoslovakia make a mistake in trying to solve her problem of minorities by democratic, rather than by brutal and violent, methods, as her neighbors have done?" The question seems to need no answer. Places in state-supported minority schools were in proportion to, or even in greater proportion than, the numbers of children among the minorities represented. From Professor Stuerm's account it appears that, acting under American stimulus, Minister Dérer did what the Weimar Republic omitted to do: he organized a democratic educational system. Some people might object that neither the theory of revisionism nor that of *Lebensraum* was taught in these schools, but on the whole Professor O. Jaszi's conclusion, in his chapter on Ruthenia, that the old "Utopia" of an Oriental Switzerland would be the only realistic solution, is vindicated.

HISTORY: No use crying over spilt political milk. The question is one of the future. In Professor Shotwell's authoritative opinion, "The great experiment . . . will be lost to the world only if Europe itself is lost." But was it really only an experiment?

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: I would not call a necessity an experiment. Czechoslovak democracy, thriving on a homogeneous culture, was the core of Hussitism. Masaryk and Benes, both of peasant descent, supported by the ability of our people, unearthed this democracy from the debris of the Austro-Hungarian landslide and made it work.

HISTORY: And the result?

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Eight contributors to this book, most of them Americans, bear witness to the economic, social, and intellectual development. There is no bragging, no overestimation of the achievements. From what Brackett Lewis tells us, we may conclude that the social legislation of the republic topped that of post-war continental Europe. Whoever reads Professor Vojan's succinct chapter on art and literature will regret that many other Czechoslovak names are not as familiar in this country as are those of Smetana, Dvorak, Novak, or of Karel Capek, Langer, and Hasek.

HISTORY: This, of course, would certainly not justify such a phrase as the "passing of Czechoslovakia." From a brilliant chapter by Wickham Steed we learn that Masaryk himself diagnosed the mental and moral disease now called "Hitlerism." Only an ignoramus takes a disease for an alternative form of government or for a "wave of the future." Those who cherished the insane hope of turning the losses of the first world war into profits had to ride on the crest of this "wave" to Munich. There is no stronger proof of the Czechoslovak democracy than the coalition of feudalism and mobocracy against its existence. However, there is a future not only in heaven, but beyond Munich as well. Believers in the self-created savior of Europe whom they mistook for a savior of their continental investments may disbelieve the truth inscribed on the Czechoslovak coat of arms. Yet democracy on earth is the only form of government corresponding to divine absolutism in the universe.

My verdict is: Czechoslovakia may have fallen a victim to the treachery of fools and the violence of cavemen, but no one can evade or kill the word of the Scriptures: "Truth is mighty and will prevail."

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RECORDS

"MUSIC for the Theatre," when I heard it in 1925, gave me the impression of Aaron Copland as the outstandingly talented American composer—an impression which I have had even from subsequent works that I have found emotionally arid and twisted and ugly, and which I have had, certainly, from the recent "Billy the Kid." The excellent Victor recording of "Music for the Theatre" made by Howard Hanson with the Eastman-Rochester Symphony (Set 744, $3.50) has given me a chance to hear the work again and discover that I think as much of it as I did in 1925. Copland has remarked on the fact that it is the most frequently played of his works; but that isn't at all remarkable: I would say that the performances it has received are evidence of its quality as music, whereas the performances of most of the other works are evidence of his efficiency as a promoter.

Soon after their performance of Brahms's B flat Piano Concerto in Carnegie Hall last year Horowitz and Toscanini and the N. B. C. Symphony recorded it for Victor (Set 740, $6.50). On this occasion Horowitz seems to have played with more emotional and physical relaxation: on the records he still answers the quiet opening measure of the orchestra too emphatically and does a few other things of the sort; but for the most part his playing doesn't exhibit the stylistic elephantiasis with which, in the concert performance, he found it necessary to measure up to the "bigness" of the music; and as a result there is none of the harsh, jangling sound that he produced from the piano at the concert. On the records, that is, he plays in his normal style—sinuous, svelte, and as such hardly suited to the character of the music—and with his normal dazzling beauty of physical sound. Sheer beauty of sound, in fact, is the outstanding quality of this new set—the beauty of the sound of the piano part, and the extraordinary beauty of the sound of the effective orchestral framework created by Toscanini and recorded not in Studio 8H but in Carnegie Hall. As against this the older Victor set offers a performance of the piano part by Schnabel that is authoritative in style, though occasionally pretentious and often technically messy, with an adequate orchestral framework by the B. B. C. Symphony under Boult. People still talk about Artur Rubinstein's wonderful performance in the early Victor set; why doesn't Victor reissue this as a Black Label Classic; and why doesn't it do the same thing with Bachaus's superb set of Chopin's Etudes?

Stokowski's record of Debussy's Prelude to "L'après-midi d'un faune" with the Philadelphia Orchestra (17700, $1) offers gorgeous orchestral sound but annoyingly fussy phrasing. Beecham's version—beautiful in sound and admirable in style—is still the one to own. Hans Kindler has recorded with his National Symphony an excellent performance of Tschaikovsky's Symphony No. 3 (Set 747, $5.50), in which Tschaikovsky's qualities and powers are evident, sometimes with fine effect. In my review copy the sixth side wavers in pitch. There is superb playing by Edwin Fischer's Chamber Orchestra in Mozart's Serenade K. 361 for thirteen wind instruments, which I find dull (Set 743, $3.50). And Fiedler's Sinfonietta has recorded a good performance of Corelli's Concerto Grosso No. 11, which I find only moderately enjoyable (13587, $1).

When Victor issued the volume of Bach's Suites Nos. 2 and 3 for solo 'cello played by Casals I wrote that listening to this music one is aware of Bach's success with the difficult problem he set himself, but also of the fact that solving the problem was not equivalent to writing great or interesting music. I would say the same thing about No. 1 in the second volume that Victor has issued (Set 742, $7.50), and of much of No. 6, which is more impressive. And I would say again that the life which the works have on these records is mostly the life created by the coloring, the movement, the tensions of Casals's phrasing—not only the bold, powerful distention of the phrases of the vigorous movements, but the subtle inflection of quiet movements like the Sarabande and second Minuet of No. 1, the ornate Allemande of No. 6.

Beethoven's high-spirited String Quartet Op. 18 No. 6 needs a performance with the brilliance and sparkle that the otherwise good Coolidge Quartet performance does not have (Set 745, $3).

The works on the first three records of the volume of Medieval and Renaissance Choral Music (Set 739, $6.50) I found less enjoyable than those on the other three: the parts of a Mass by Obrecht (13558/9), the Gregorian chant and pieces by Taverner, Lassus, and Palestrina (13560). The singing of the Choir of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music conducted by Mother Stevens is superb. Melchior is in his best voice

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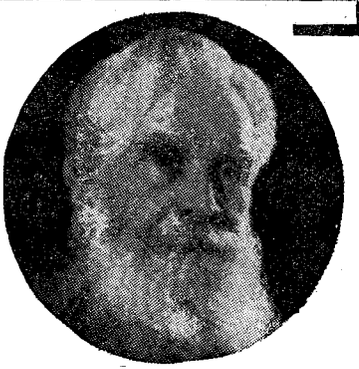

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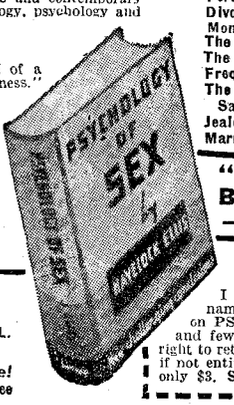

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of today in the passages from Wagner's music-dramas that Victor has issued in one volume (Set 749, $5.50); and Flagstad, who joins him in the first-act duet from "Götterdämmerung," sings marvelously. The two Sibelius songs recorded a while back by Marian Anderson, "Aus banger Brust" and "Langsamt som Kvallsskyn" (2146, $.75), are inconsequential; Miss Anderson's voice is lovelier on the record than it is today.

Rodzinski and the Cleveland Orchestra recorded for Columbia a fine performance of Strauss's "Heldenleben" which emerges from the records (Set 441, $5.50) sounding dull and muffled.

B. H. HAGGIN

FILMS

Defense and the Movies

Hollywood, March 18

THE industry at the moment presents the most delightful prospect of patriotic fervor and cooperation with the government in the matter of the defense program—truly a most laudable spectacle. Naturally the considerations which motivate this are, first, the almost universal support and approval of the government's foreign policy amongst the big producers and, secondly, the box-office demand for an expression of that support. However, certain factors may be said to help noticeably in making the bed more comfortable for such strange companions as the Hollywood executives and the Roosevelt Administration. Joseph Schenck is now in the dock in Washington on a charge of income-tax evasion amounting to nearly half a million, thus demonstrating with distressing clarity the vulnerability of the most powerful movie potentates; while the threat of an investigation of the activities of the major studios under the anti-trust laws is a powerful whip which Washing might crack.

Hollywood's major service to defense is, of course, its South American good-will program, which has not so far been remarkably successful, but which is shortly to be expanded and it is hoped improved under the guidance of Jock Whitney. Mr. Whitney, who is associated with Nelson Rockefeller in the attempt to promote friendship and understanding with the Latin Americas, has recently arrived in town to give advice on productions for South American consumption. On the home front, the industry is chiefly concerned with fostering Americanism and popularizing various of the least acceptable parts of the defense program, such as the draft. A certain crudity of approach to these subjects must be excused on the grounds of enthusiasm: for instance, in any current production the most hard-boiled characters are apt to dissolve into maudlin tears at the sound of "The Star-Spangled Banner," and practically any player with a foreign accent will, some time during the course of a picture, stare glassily at the audience and in broken accents itemize the virtues of the United States, regardless of the plot. Also, Warner Brothers are turning out in increasing numbers the patriotic "shorts" they have been making for several years under the auspices of Harry Warner, with whom Americanism has always been a major concern.

The most direct contribution of the industry to the defense program is a series of shorts for army consumption only. These shorts will not be shown, under any circumstances, to the general public and as they are non-profit-making and as no credits or publicity are supposed to attach to them the burden of production is being shouldered by the Research Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences headed by Darryl Zanuck. The research council is sponsored by the producers, who thus have joint responsibility. The army has recently been sending to Hollywood one officer each year from the Signal Corps to study methods of motion picture production: these officers have worked with the research council, placing it in a good position to embark on productions for the army.

The shorts are supposed to be made by all of the studios, or at any rate by most, but so far Darryl Zanuck's studio, Twentieth-Century Fox, seems to have the monopoly. Actually only two have been made so far—on hygiene and on venereal disease. One was directed by John Ford, the other by Irving Pichel, and both are reported to be frightening to a degree and extremely well made.

Training and technical films of every variety are scheduled for production and the army hopes for excellent results and increased speed in getting recruits into shape through the medium of the screen. Certain Hollywood writers have volunteered for service in the Signal Corps with the intention of writing commentary and dialogue for these films; there is a rumor (unsubstantiated) that in some studios writers under contract who are considered not to be earning their salaries have had pressure put on them to join the Signal Corps. However, Hollywood's defense program is progressing with only minor frictions.

HIGH HAT

The function of the week was the Screen Actors Guild Gambol, a charity affair held at the Cocoanut Grove. The usual brilliant constellation attended the party, which was remarkable only for the fact that President Roosevelt's campaign hat, which he had recently presented to Edward Arnold, was put up for auction and sold to Edward G. Robinson and Melvyn Douglas for $3,200.

RECENT FILMS

For muddled thinking and mawkish sentiment "Meet John Doe" undoubtedly deserves a special academy award . . . a gilt crocodile in tears. Frank Capra, who directed this picture, has long been associated with hearts of gold and virtue triumphant, but his more successful creations, such as Mr. Smith and Mr. Deeds, had a certain allegorical robustness about them which John Doe sadly lacks. John Doe, the brain child of a sob-sister (and he could hardly have been anything else), is materialized in the form of a hobo who starts a nation-wide movement based on good neighborliness; the movement is exploited by a big business shark who wants to run for President on the John Doe ticket and who dresses his henchmen in black uniforms (get it?) The final sequence discloses big business in repentant tears and John Doe, who is a sticker if nothing else, determined to keep the John Doe movement alive. The picture is designed to deliver a message, a task in which Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, and Edward Arnold give able cooperation, but what the message is remains a mystery.

"That Night in Rio" strikes another sledgehammer blow for—or should one say at?—Pan-American friendship. This musical in vivid technicolor which features Alice Faye, Don Ameche, and Carmen Miranda (who radiates more energy than a dynamo) is luxurious and high-spirited to a degree.

Untrammeled by historical fact Alexander Korda's production of "That Hamilton Woman," based on the lives of Nelson and Lady Hamilton, makes a lovely spectacle and an interesting if slightly lengthy and incredible tale. Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier do wonders with their somewhat stilted dialogue and Miss Leigh looks unbelievably beautiful. The battle of Trafalgar provides a terrific climax and there is plenty of opportunity for anti-dictator propaganda.

ANTHONY BOWER

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Letters to the Editors

Inside Germany

Dear Sirs: The following is a letter recently received from a German friend:

"Somewhere in a
German Occupied Country

"Dear Charles: If I was not on an inspection trip through occupied areas there would hardly be a chance to send you an uncensored report on our domestic 'theater of war.' But from here I can make use of an underground channel for postal service. . . .

"The maintenance of the public safety in our different occupied areas is the duty of the police administration rather than of the military forces. The number of the military forces in the occupied territories is relatively small; they are mainly stationed at points of military importance; for instance, along the Channel. 'The police protects the rear of the army,' is an official pronouncement. In other words, Heinrich Himmler's police organization, which is several hundred thousand men strong, is the true master of continental Europe. His chief executive officers are the 'Supreme SS and Police Leader East' in Cracow and the 'Supreme SS and Police Leaders' in Oslo, in The Hague, and in Prague. These police generals are in command of the large police armies which are divided into machine-gun, tank, pioneer, mounted, and other units. These uniformed police forces, in cooperation with the forces of the secret police (Gestapo), have the task of ruthlessly suppressing any form of revolutionary movement in its very beginnings.

"A great difficulty in the establishment of the administrative set-up of the New Order is caused by lack of appropriate personnel, particularly noticed in the police force. Where can we find the ten thousand new police officials required? We have been instructed by a confidential administrative order of Heinrich Himmler 'to select men between twenty-six and forty years of age.' With regard to the great need of personnel: 'We shall lower the standard of the candidates' physical fitness.' But in order to show other nations that we are really a master race, Himmler's circular further instructs us that 'only racially good-looking applicants are to be selected for active service.' I cannot imagine what is going to happen should we have to suppress a revolutionary movement with racially good-looking but physically unfit policemen. Hermann Goering made objections to this kind of selection, but unsuccessfully.

"By the way, Goering's new letterheads carry the title 'The Reich's Marshal of Greater Germany' (*Der Reichsmarschall des Grossdeutschen Reiches).*

"If you in the other hemisphere believe that our administration runs without inner resistance and sabotage, you are very much mistaken. The Fuehrer, of course, still believes he can overcome all resistance by the utmost severity and ruthlessness. So the old Russian system of the knout has been resurrected during the past weeks. You can find evidence of this in the numerous newly introduced legal provisions for the punishment of soldiers, air-raid wardens, and parents of juvenile delinquents.

"The following law is now valid in the navy: 'The commander of any vessel will receive capital punishment if he surrenders his ship or his crew to the enemy without previously having taken all steps which might have prevented such an act of surrender.' Thus, Hitler has introduced the principle of destroying a ship rather than letting her fall into the hands of the enemy.

"It is typical of our attitude toward the Italian Axis partner that the German martial laws apply also to the Italian officers attached to our army. But no corresponding regulation applies to the German officers attached to the Italian army.

"You will be surprised to hear that our air-raid protection does not work efficiently, in spite of the continuous press and radio propaganda and of severe punishments by the police administration and the courts. This is not my private opinion but that of the Fuehrer himself. He recently expressed his 'deepest dissatisfaction' with the lack of discipline during the blackouts, especially in Berlin. At his instigation the Deputy Leader, Rudolf Hess, sent a circular to all district governors, ordering immediate improvement. In this circular it is emphasized that the working-classes do not properly black out the rear windows of their houses. The circular says: 'Heavy infractions against the blackout regulations occur continuously during night alarms. Therefore, in order to guarantee the necessary discipline, infractions must be punished more severely than before.'

"The higher officials worry a good deal about the political developments of 1941. I wonder whether the Fuehrer himself believes what he writes, for instance, about the 'final victory which will come soon.' "

R. M. W. KEMPNER

Philadelphia, Pa., March 18

The Ex-Descendants

Dear Sirs: The letter from the recording secretary of the Descendants of the American Revolution (in the March 15 issue) attempts to defend the mailing to the House and Senate Foreign Affairs Committees of a strongly worded condemnation of H. 1776 without first polling the membership of the organization. No resolution adopted by the national committee is binding on the membership, for it is no more than a recommendation for action. The executive committee, invoking democracy, performed as dictators. The committee well knew the acute differences within the organization regarding the constitutionality of H. 1776, and the resigning members have published their denial of its authority to impose upon them a partisan personal opinion.

The committee were not unanimous in adopting the resolution. The two members specifically referred to in the recording secretary's letter abstained from voting and assumed no responsibility for the action.

HELEN TUFTS BAILIE

Cambridge, Mass., March 15

Add Vichy and Bergson

Dear Sirs: In a letter about Henri Bergson and the respectful treatment accorded him by some members of the Vichy government, published in your issue of February 22, Miss Betty Barzin states that "the gulf which divides, and always will divide, Latin civilization and German Kultur" is illustrated by the fact that "post-1933 Germany did not treat him [Edmund Husserl] as the Vichy authorities are now treating Bergson." In drawing this contrast, Miss Barzin misstates several facts.

Husserl never "fled to Czechoslovakia" or to any other place. In 1936 he lectured in Vienna and Prague, obviously with the consent of the German authorities who gave him his passport. He then returned to his home in Freiburg, Baden,

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where he continued to live, write, and publish, though his only subsequent work appeared in Yugoslavia. It was in Freiburg, not in Czechoslovakia, that he died in 1938. Shortly after his death, the University of Louvain provided a place for his manuscripts and, again with the consent of the German government, two young scholars, non-Jewish German nationals, went to Belgium to prepare his unpublished work for the press. These men were still at work in Louvain when the German armies invaded Belgium. Meanwhile, Husserl's widow had also removed to Louvain, in the spring of 1939, a few months after the manuscripts had been installed there and work on them had begun.

It is a question whether the quasi-official funeral honors accorded M. Bergson argue "a love of the spirit still shown by the very French government that is at the same time ousting Jews from places of learning." The facts suggest an interpretation less paradoxical and less flattering. But surely the claim "that German pressure is in no way affecting French culture" is exaggerated, even if one grants that the land of Dreyfus has probably continued to produce enough native anti-Semitism to explain Vichy's anti-Jewish regulations.

"France," Miss Barzin assures us, "may be crushed materially, politically, and even morally. But the love of the spirit for the spirit's sake will live there forever." Is it foolish to cherish a like hope for Germany, even while we go about the task of defeating German arms?

DORION CAIRNS

Rockford, Ill., March 14

Dear Sirs: I am sorry my letter about Bergson and Vichy contained the misstatements to which Mr. Cairns has drawn your attention, but I feel that his corrections provide in themselves further evidence that there is a gulf dividing Latin civilization and German Kultur.

Mr. Cairns points out that Husserl died in Freiburg (Germany) and not in Czechoslovakia, as I wrongly assumed. If the German civilian and academic authorities had honored Husserl in the way the French have honored Bergson, I could not have made this mistake, for which, once again, I apologize.

Mr. Cairns further writes that Husserl's manuscripts have found a home at Louvain University. No doubt he has good reasons for that statement. Nevertheless, in Brussels, shortly before the German invasion, I was asked for advice on what Husserl's widow should do with "several cases of her husband's papers." Hence my second misstatement. I sincerely hope that the Husserl manuscripts that reached Louvain were not lost in the second destruction of the Louvain Library. To my knowledge, Bergson's papers and manuscripts are not "exiled."

I must draw attention to a misstatement made by Mr. Cairns. He writes ". . . he (Husserl) continued to live, write, and publish (in Freiburg), though his only subsequent work appeared in Yugoslavia." This sentence is mysterious to me. What, in that instance, is meant by the word *publish?* As far as can be ascertained from Husserl's bibliography, Germany's greatest philosopher did not *publish* one single line in Germany after 1933. Three works by Husserl have been published since Hitler's advent, and all three outside Germany: (1) A letter addressed to the 1934 Prague Congress of Philosophy (which obviously had to be published in Prague); (2) *Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die transcendentale Phänomenologie,* published in Belgrade in 1936, which is, I suppose, "the only subsequent work," appearing "in Yugoslavia" to which Mr. Cairns refers (printed in *Philosophia,* a review edited by a group of exiled German philosophers); and (3) a volume of 478 pages, *Erfahrung und Urteil,* published in Prague in 1939 by Husserl's disciple Landgrebe on the eve of the German invasion of Czechoslovakia. I feel very strongly that Bergson would never have been compelled to publish his writings outside France.

BETTY BARZIN

New York, March 20

Pirates' Accomplice?

Dear Sirs: I find one point disturbing in Mr. Brooks Atkinson's article (issue of March 8).

In seeking to interpret today's crisis in the clear-cut terms of an issue which is basically moral, it seems to me that Mr. Atkinson falls into the common error of painting things too wholly in terms of blacks and whites. No one can disagree with his vigorous condemnation of international piracy as being morally wrong. But why condemn only the pirate, and, by implication at least, condone his accomplices? Of course it was morally wrong for Italy to ravage Ethiopia and for Italy and Germany together to rape Spain. But was it morally right for England to permit the former, and for England and France together to conspire actively to do the latter? We fail to serve the moral cause by suppressing facts or by interpreting only part of the picture.

If out of the "blood and tears and toil and sweat" of this war the necessary social rebirth is to come it is important that we continue to condemn the moral mistakes of England too, if the mistakes of 1919 are not to be repeated.

RABBI ROLAND B. GITTELSOHN

Rockville Centre, L. I., March 17

CONTRIBUTORS

RAOUL AGLION, formerly legal attaché in the French legation at Cairo, has in preparation a book titled "Victories in the Desert," to be published shortly by Henry Holt and Company.

ROSE M. STEIN, who is now doing labor research in Washington, is a regular contributor to *The Nation.*

W. H. AUDEN, English poet and critic, is at present in this country. His latest volume of verse is "The Double Man."

LOUIS KRONENBERGER, dramatic critic of *PM,* is a frequent contributor of literary reviews to *The Nation.*

HANS KOHN, professor of modern European history at Smith College, is the author of "Not by Arms Alone."

EILEEN HOLDING is an English journalist and lecturer now living in the United States.

FREDA UTLEY is the author of "The Dream We Lost: Soviet Russia Then and Now."

LOUIS B. SALOMON, a member of the English department of Brooklyn College, reviews fiction regularly for *The Nation.*

RUSTEM VAMBERY, distinguished Hungarian criminologist and sociologist now in this country, has written extensively on European problems.

ANTHONY BOWER, formerly film critic for the *New Statesman and Nation,* contributes a fortnightly column from Hollywood to *The Nation.*

CORRECTION: ALBERT VITON teaches at Northwestern University and not at the University of Chicago, as stated in *The Nation* of March 22.

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

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